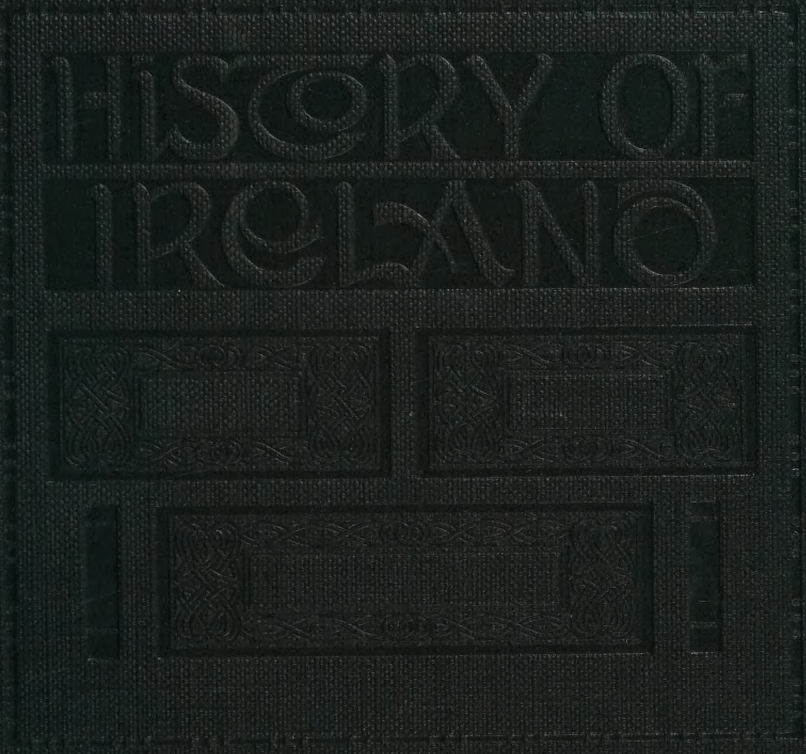
HISTORY OF
IRELAND

MONROE H. HANDLIN
122-15TH AVENUE
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History of Ireland

HALF-VOLUME VII

PRESIDENT ARTHUR GRIFFITH

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HISTORY OF IRELAND

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

THE RIGHT REV.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

	PAGE
Twenty Years' Resolute Government	1
Tory Reforms	2
General Election of 1906	3
Liberals and Home Rule	4
Irish Leaders and the Liberals	5
The New Government	5
Mr. Bryce, Chief Secretary	6
The English Education Bill	7
The Irish support the Liberals	8
The House of Lords	10
Cattle-driving	11
Mr. Birrell succeeds Mr. Bryce	11
The Irish Councils Bill	13
Condemned by National Convention	18
Irish Party Manifesto	19
Sinn Fein Party	20

CHAPTER II

LEADERS AND PARTIES

The Home Rule Question	23
Mr. Redmond	24
Mr. John Dillon	25
Mr. T. P. O'Connor	28
Mr. Devlin	29

PAGE

The Ancient Order of Hibernians 29
Machined Public Opinion 32
Favours from the Liberals 32
Mr. William O'Brien 33
Mr. T. M. Healy 34
The Rank and File of the Irish Party 34
The Irish Unionists 35
Colonel Saunderson 36
Sir Edward Carson 37
The Gaelic League 39
The Agricultural Organization Society 39
The University Bill of 1908 40
The Home Rule Question 41
Mr. Asquith's Ministry 43

CHAPTER III

SUPPORTING THE LIBERALS

The Irish Leaders expectant 44
Land Purchase 45
National Convention 46
Opening of Parliament 47
Irish Lawlessness 48
Irish Land Bill 50
The Poor Man's Budget 53
Fresh Burdens on Ireland 57
Dissatisfaction in Ireland 60

CHAPTER IV

SLOW PROGRESS

English Parties and Ireland 64
The House of Lords 64
The English Education Bill 65
The Liberals and the Lords 66

PAGE
Old Age Pensions and University Education 68
Mr. Asquith and the Lords 69
The Irish Language 73
Irish in the National University 75

CHAPTER V

THE BALANCE OF POWER

The Budget of 1909 85
The Irish and the Liberals 87
The Irish Leaders resent Criticism 89
The General Election of 1910 90
Mr. Asquith and Home Rule 93
The Lords' Veto 93
The Budget of 1910 96
The Parliament Bill 98
Death of Edward VII 98
Conference on the Lords' Veto 99
The Irish Leaders dissatisfied 99
"The Dollar Dictator" 101
Parliament dissolved 102

CHAPTER VI

PLOUGHING THE SANDS

Mr. Healy and the Irish Party 103
Parliament and Home Rule 104
The Parliament Bill 105
The Insurance Bill 107
Payment of Members 110
Irish Emigration 111
The Irish Party losing Ground 111
Mr. Griffith and Sinn Fein 112
Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon 116
Prospects of Home Rule 117

CHAPTER VII

THE HOME RULE BILL

PAGE

Ineffective Irish Leadership 118
The New Home Rule Bill 120
The Financial Provisions 121
Other Clauses 125
Mr. Redmond praises the Bill 127
Opponents of the Bill 130
Debates in Parliament 133
Mr. Redmond's Weakness 134

CHAPTER VIII

THE VETO OF BELFAST

The Home Rule Bill rejected and reintroduced . . . 136
The Ulster Difficulty 137
Carson's Leadership 139
British and Irish Unionists 141
Militant Ecclesiastics 143
Civil War threatened 144
The Ulster Volunteers 146
Tampering with the Army 148
Home Rule Bill passed 152
Carson still Defiant 152

CHAPTER IX

LIBERAL TREACHERY

Insincerity of the Liberal Leaders 154
Mr. Churchill in Belfast 158
Orange Opposition 159
Carson's Defiance 160
Partition of Ireland 161
Carson and Churchill 164

PAGE
Mutinous Army Officers 166
The Irish Volunteers 167
Buckingham Palace Conference 170
The Home Rule Bill becomes Law 170

CHAPTER X

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW

Parnell and his Successors compared 172
Irish Republicans—James Connolly 174
James Larkin 175
Sean M'Dermott 176
Patrick Pearse 177
Volunteer Manifesto 178
Irish and National Volunteers 180
National Volunteers and the Army 183
Mr. Redmond's Position 184
Coalition Government 187
The New Sinn Feiners 188
Pearse and Connolly Unite 189

CHAPTER XI

THE REBELLION OF EASTER WEEK

Mr. Redmond and the Government 193
Dr. O'Dwyer's Letter 194
Attitude of the Irish Leaders 195
Pearse and Connolly 196
Reasons for Discontent 197
On the Eve of Rebellion 198
The Rebellion—The Irish Republic 200
Fighting in Dublin 202
The Leaders surrender 208
The Country Districts 208

PAGE
Sinn Fein blamed 209
General Maxwell's Brutalities 209
Effect on Public Opinion 211

CHAPTER XII

AFTER THE REBELLION

Irish Discontent 213
Mr. Asquith, Peacemaker 215
Redmond and Carson 216
Mr. Lloyd George's Proposals 218
The Partition of Ulster 220
New Irish Government 224
Irish Party Unpopular 224
The Great War 225
Mr. Lloyd George Premier 226
Sinn Fein Popular 228
Redmond and Lloyd George 228
President Wilson and the War 229

LIST OF PLATES

HALF-VOLUME VII

FACING PAGE

President Arthur Griffith - - - - - *Frontispiece*

John Dillon. Joseph Devlin. John E. Redmond - - 16

Colonel Saunderson. Lord Carson - - - - - - 32

Herbert H. Asquith. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman - - 48

Lord Wolverhampton. Lord Bryce. Viscount Grey - 64

Maurice Healy. J. J. Clancy. William Redmond. Professor T. M. Kettle - - - - - - - - - 96

General Sir Hubert Gough. James Campbell (Lord Glenavy). Ronald McNeill. A. Bonar Law - - 112

The Principal Members of the Provisional Government of Ulster - - - - - - - - - - - 144

Patrick H. Pearse. Sir Roger Casement. James Connolly. Professor J. MacNeill - - - - - - - - 160

MAP

Map of Ireland - - - - - - - - - - - - 8

History of Ireland

IRELAND SINCE 1906

CHAPTER I

The Liberal Government

In 1886 the Marquis of Salisbury, then chief of the Tory Party, called the Irish Hottentots, who were incapable of self-government, and for whom the proper remedy was twenty years of continuous coercion. At the end of that period " Ireland will be fit to accept any gifts in the way of local government or repeal of coercion laws that you (the British Parliament) may wish to give her ".[1] He had been Prime Minister the previous year, and had held office by the aid of the Irish Nationalists on the basis of no coercion for Ireland. But English politicians have never hesitated to break their promises to Ireland, and Lord Salisbury was one of the worst of such politicians. He was an aristocrat and a bigot who hated the Irish and their religion, and when he became Prime Minister for the second time, in 1886, after the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, and was no longer dependent on the Irish vote, the regime of twenty years' coercion began by the passing of the Perpetual Coercion Act of 1887 and the appointment of Lord Salisbury's nephew, Mr. A. J. Balfour, to the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Nor could any

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii, 557–8.

more suitable Chief Secretary be found for enforcing coercion, a man who defended every attack on the people's liberties, inflicted every indignity on the people's representatives, and justified every outrage of executive officers from the judge to the policeman.

A Government which employed the forger Pigott to blacken the character of its political opponents could not long survive the exposure of Pigott and his paymasters, and especially when the opposing forces were led by such capable chiefs as Gladstone and Parnell. But untoward and unsuspected events saved the Tories from crushing defeat in 1892. The fall of Parnell brought division and weakness to a party lately so powerful and disciplined. Old age at last impaired the vigour of the wonderful old man who had so often led the Liberal hosts to victory. Neither Parnell nor Gladstone left a successor capable of grasping the reins of leadership. The result was that Lord Salisbury got almost his twenty years of power to experiment on Ireland. For, excepting the short interval from 1892 to 1895, during which the Liberals were in office but not in power, the Tories governed from 1886 to the last days of 1905.

Yet Lord Salisbury's prescription of continued coercion was not altogether relied on; for though the Perpetual Coercion Act of 1887 was put on the Statute Book it was not always rigorously enforced. And there were measures of reform as well as measures of repression. There were, for instance, the Land Act of 1891 and that of 1896, involving an extension of land purchase and providing a remedy for congestion in Connaught. There was the establishment of an agricultural department, and the passing of the Local Government Act. And, greater than these, there was the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, which was the outcome of a conference between landlord and tenant representatives, and in which conciliation and compromise found expression.

Defeated in the last days of 1905, the Tories gave place to the Liberals, but on the understanding that there should be an appeal to the country, and this was done in the early days of 1906.

The position can best be understood by a study of the speeches

of the rival leaders as they stood before the electors and solicited their votes. The Liberals, though in office, were the assailants, and the grounds of attack were tariff reform, financial extravagance, Chinese labour in the Transvaal, and bungling of the South African War. They also proposed to secularize the English primary schools, which was an attack on the Tory Education Act of 1902. Mr. Balfour at Manchester (2nd January) dexterously evaded most of these questions and then turned to assail the Liberals, who, he said, in proposing to repeal the Education Act of 1902, wanted to destroy the voluntary schools. He charged them also with wishing to disestablish the Church and with being Home Rulers, though not avowed Home Rulers. As for tariff reform he was not enthusiastic, though he believed in adapting our fiscal policy "to the changing conditions of a changing world".[1]

Mr. Chamberlain was the great protagonist of tariff reform, and would impose duties on imported corn, meat, and dairy produce, as well as on foreign and manufactured goods, not, however, on Colonial imports, as the colonies must get preferential treatment.[2] In this, however, his friend the Duke of Devonshire would not agree, though he was opposed, like Mr. Chamberlain, to Home Rule in any form.

On the other hand, the Premier, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, charged his Unionist opponents with having turned the House of Commons into a mere registering machine; with having brought Chinese labour into the Transvaal; with having muddled and mismanaged the South African War; with having legislated for the classes rather than for the people. And he fiercely attacked Mr. Chamberlain's tariff reform as taxing the poor man's food.[3] He said nothing about Home Rule, and on being tackled on the subject at a public meeting he declared that "the proper solution of the Irish question was the reference to an Irish body of matters not concerning England and Scotland; but he did not believe there would be any opportunity for passing such a scheme in the

[1] *Times* report. [2] *Daily Mail Year Book*, pp. 28–9.
[3] *Times* report, Jan. 7.

near future ".[1] Even less satisfactory were the speeches of Sir Edward Grey and Sir Henry Fowler, who declared that the Government would not use a majority obtained for free trade to bring in a measure of Home Rule.[2] And it was well known that Mr. Asquith's views on Home Rule coincided with those of Fowler and Grey. " It was long disputed ", says the *Annual Register*, " which of these issues was really most prominent in the minds of the electors. Probably the first place must be given to the fiscal question, with ' Chinese slavery ' next, and then the modification of the Education Act of 1902; while it is improbable that alarm at Home Rule lost the minority many votes."[3]

Yet, in spite of the Liberal attitude on Home Rule, the Irish leaders on the first day of the year issued a manifesto advising the Irish voters in Great Britain to vote for Liberal and Labour candidates. They charged the Tories with having in Ireland brought on administrative confusion, increased poverty, and reduced the population. They returned them no thanks for the Local Government Act, which transferred the whole local administration of the counties from the hands of the landlords and their satellites to the hands of the people. And they had no gratitude for the Wyndham Act of 1903, one of the greatest measures of reform for Ireland ever passed by the British Parliament.

Mr. Parnell would have acted differently. He would have encouraged Mr. Wyndham to settle the University question as he had settled the Land question. He would have accepted help from Lord Dunraven in extending the bounds of local government and curbing the extravagance of Irish administration, while continuing to agitate for Home Rule. He would have held himself aloof from both parties, ready to be friendly with that party which was friendly to Ireland. And he would certainly not have given the Irish vote in Great Britain to a Liberal party manned by such leaders as Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Asquith, whose lukewarmness on the Home Rule question was patent to all the world. He distrusted the Liberals, and with good reason, and

[1] *Times* report, Jan. 13. [2] *Annual Register*, p. 4.
[3] *Annual Register*, p. 2.

as they did not stand where Gladstone stood on the Irish question, he would not have helped them to victory. For to give them an overwhelming majority was just as dangerous as to give an overwhelming majority to the Tories.

But those who ruled the Irish Party in 1906 were smaller men than Parnell, and had less political sagacity; and instead of holding aloof from the Liberals, who had turned their backs on Home Rule, they gave them the Irish vote in Great Britain, so as to make their victory more complete. When the General Election was over there were 377 Liberals, 53 Labour members, 157 Unionists, and 83 Nationalists. These last included Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Timothy Healy, who did not approve of the party policy in its entirety.

In the new Parliament the Liberals were so strong that they could dispense with Irish support, and with Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and Sir Henry Fowler in the Cabinet, Ireland did not get a prominent place on the Government's programme. Parliament opened in February, and the King's Speech had nothing more to promise Ireland than what was contained in the following paragraph. "My Ministers have under consideration plans for improving and effecting economies in the system of government in Ireland, and for introducing into it means for associating the people with the conduct of Irish affairs. It is my desire that the government of the country, in reliance upon the ordinary law, should be carried on, so far as existing circumstances permit, in a spirit regardful of the wishes and sentiments of the Irish people; and I trust that this may conduce to the maintenance of tranquillity and of good feeling between different classes in the community."[1]

This was poor recompense for the party that had helped the Liberals to power. The Crimes Act of 1887 was not to be enforced, but it was not to be repealed, and might be enforced at any time. But there was no promise of extending local government and of effecting economies in the Irish administrative system. Mr. Bryce, the Chief Secretary, as if he wanted to console the

[1] *Hansard.*

Irish members, declared that he had been a Home Ruler since 1886; but he did not say that the Government of which he was a member meant to bring in a Home Rule Bill and endeavour to pass it. Ireland was tranquil and Orange Ulster less bellicose than usual, and some change was called for in the character of the Irish Government. Mr. Redmond, the Irish leader, was plainly disappointed, and declared that nothing would ever settle the Irish question except Home Rule. But Mr. Dillon, who always put himself in evidence on such occasions, described Mr. Bryce's speech as a brave speech, and he undertook on the part of all the Nationalists to say that they accepted the paragraph in the King's Speech as satisfactory, as a broad declaration of principle.[1]

If Mr. Dillon spoke in this fashion for all his fellow-Nationalists they were indeed easily satisfied, for the paragraph was purposely vague, and in the session of 1906, though it was unusually long, there was no measure of Irish local government passed, or even introduced.

In the next month Mr. Bryce was still ready with his sympathy for Ireland. The debate was on Irish education, and he readily admitted that the whole educational system in Ireland was at fault. With regard to primary education, he hoped that more local interest would be taken in the schools, and he expected to improve the status of the teachers and the condition of the schools. In the intermediate schools he wanted to have more technical education; and as to University education all admitted that it was unsatisfactory. Even such an aggressive Tory as Sir Edward Carson admitted this, and was willing to help in a solution. But, again, Mr. Bryce did nothing except to appoint a Commission on the University question. Not a few began to think that Mr. Bryce must have paid a visit to Blarney and kissed the far-famed Blarney stone. He was certainly a great believer in soft talk, and in promises not meant to be kept. And just as there was nothing done in the session of 1906 to reform Irish administration, neither was anything done to reform Irish education in any of its branches.

The only measures relating to Ireland that Mr. Bryce had

[1] *Hansard*, Feb. 21.

placed to his credit were the Irish Labourers Act and the Town Tenants Act. The former provided the sum of £4,500,000 on loan at a low interest, for the erection of labourers' cottages.[1] It proved a beneficial measure, securing proper accommodation for a hard-working class of men who had hitherto suffered much from defective housing conditions. Its justice appealed to all parties. Even the most reactionary Unionists, such as Colonel Saunderson and Mr. Walter Long, voted for it, so that Nationalist and Unionist for once acted together, a very unusual spectacle when there was question of an Irish Bill.[2] The Town Tenants Act protected to some extent the improvements of occupying tenants in towns, and though not going far, gave them, within certain limits, security of tenure.

But though the ordinary session was followed by an autumn session, which did not conclude its sittings until the last days of December, the very short time spent on these two Irish Bills, and an occasional debate on the estimates, was all the time which was devoted to Ireland. The greater part of both sessions was given to the English Education Bill, which was introduced by Mr. Birrell, passed after prolonged and bitter opposition in the House of Commons, and finally was so amended out of existence in the House of Lords that it was dropped and not again revived. It proposed to put the whole machinery of primary education in the hands of a local body called the Educational Authority, with power to appoint and dismiss teachers, to arrange programmes, and to select class-books. Its members might be of different religions, or of none; but with religion, except in a very attenuated form of Bible teaching, which might and did satisfy Nonconformists, they were to have nothing to do. There were to be no religious tests for teachers and no teaching of denominational Christianity within school hours, nor outside of school hours except in the voluntary schools already existing. But even here the consent of the Educational Authority must be obtained, and the religious teaching was hedged round with such disabilities as to be rendered impossible of giving with effect.

[1] *Hansard*, March 1. [2] *Hansard*, June 14.

The Irish Nationalists could do nothing else than oppose such a measure, which aimed a mortal blow at the Catholic schools of England, frequented by the children of the Catholic poor of Irish descent; and Messrs. Redmond, Dillon, and Healy spoke and voted against it on the second reading. Mr. Healy justly described it as a Nonconformist Act of Uniformity, and made the suggestion that the back of it should have the inscription: "Go and teach all nations with the consent of the County Council".[1] The Irish Party voted against its second and third reading, and endeavoured to amend it in Committee, not, however, with much success. In the subsequent proceedings Mr. Healy and Mr. O'Brien were more logical and more independent than Messrs. Redmond and Dillon. For on the Bill coming back to the House of Commons amended out of all recognition by the Lords, and as such unacceptable by the Government, Mr. Healy and Mr. O'Brien voted against the Government, but Messrs. Redmond and Dillon voted on the opposite side. Mr. Dillon took care to dissociate his party from the party of the Catholic Duke of Norfolk, and desired "a concordance with the English democracy".[2] And when the Bill in its amended form was dropped, Mr. Redmond expressed regret at its loss. These two gentlemen also sided with the Liberals in their acceptance of a resolution favouring payment of members of Parliament, though Mr. Redmond was careful to say that the Nationalists would never accept payment for themselves, but would continue to rely on the generosity of their own people.[3]

Yet this unwavering support of the Government, this subserviency to Liberal opinion, brought the Irish Party no substantial reward. The over-taxation of Ireland was a matter of urgency and of admitted injustice, but when Mr. Redmond protested against its continuance, Mr. Asquith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would only express his sympathy, and his intention to do something at some future date. And Mr. Dillon, who could scarcely ever find fault with a Liberal statesman, was satisfied

[1] *Hansard*, May 11. [2] *Hansard*, Dec. 12. [3] *Hansard*, March 8.

English Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH CHANNEL
IRISH SEA
ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL
IRELAND
NORTHERN
LONDONDERRY
ANTRIM
DONEGAL
TYRONE
FERMANAGH
ARMAGH
DOWN
MONAGHAN
CAVAN
LOUTH
SLIGO
MAYO
ROSCOMMON
LONGFORD
WEST MEATH
MEATH
DUBLIN
KILDARE
KINGS COUNTY
FREE STATE
GALWAY
CLARE
LIMERICK
TIPPERARY
QUEENS COUNTY
KILKENNY
CARLOW
WICKLOW
WEXFORD
WATERFORD
KERRY
CORK
Donegal Bay
Dingle Bay
Galway Bay
Dundalk Bay
Belfast Lough
Strangford Lough
Lough Foyle
Lough Swilly
Lough Erne
Lough Neagh
Lough Derg
Lough Ree
Lough Corrib
Lough Mask
Lough Gill
Lough Conn
Lough Allen
Lough Gara
Lough Arrow
Lough Gowna
Lough Sheelin
Lough Owel
Lough Ennell
Lough Derravaragh
Lough Ramor
Lough Sheelin
Lough Gullion
Lough Ennell
Lough Owel

to give Mr. Asquith plenty of time to apply a remedy for this glaring wrong.[1]

It was quite right that the Irish Party should support the Government in conceding a full measure of Home Rule to the Transvaal, a measure which gave the Boer the full rights of British citizenship, manhood suffrage, and the payment of their members of Parliament.[2]

But if the Boer, who had lately fought and often defeated the British army, could be treated with such generosity as this, surely equal generosity might be shown to Ireland, whose representatives were the constant and unwavering supporters of the Government. Public opinion in Ireland was dissatisfied and querulous, and Mr. Redmond himself, though willing to stand much, was constrained to complain. At Grange, in the County of Limerick (23rd September), he sorrowfully confessed that the British Parliament did not understand Ireland and would not give her Home Rule, and that, in spite of receiving Nationalist support, the Nationalist leaders were never consulted by the Government. He was told indeed that there was to be a measure of administrative Home Rule, but that for himself and his party they would take no responsibility for such a makeshift. The Government had disregarded Irish opinion and falsified their own promises, and he ended by threatening opposition and a renewal of agitation. The Liberal press was greatly shocked at this outburst of independence; but "though Mr. Redmond reiterated his warning at Athlone on 7th October, the Nationalist attitude during the autumn session tended on the whole to reassure the Liberal rank and file".[3]

They had indeed little ground for alarm. Neither Mr. Redmond nor Mr. Dillon wished to break with their Liberal friends; and the *Freeman's Journal*, which was the party organ, and was especially the mouthpiece of Mr. Dillon, sneered at anybody who criticized party methods as a factionist. In its review of the year 1906 it described an attempt to settle the Evicted Tenants Question as "an abortive attempt to distract the

[1] *Hansard*, May 3. [2] *Annual Register*, pp. 200–1.
[3] *Annual Register*, p. 217.

Nationalist movement", and it consoled Irish Nationalists by assuring them that the National Party remained undisturbed. This apparently was of much greater importance than to have the evicted tenants restored to their homes.

Meantime Mr. Michael Davitt had died in May. He had abandoned Parliament, satisfied that it would never concede Ireland's just demands. And if he had been alive and active during the whole of 1906, he would probably have seriously differed from Mr. Redmond's policy of passing Liberal measures without getting for Ireland anything in return, except promises which were not seriously meant to be fulfilled.

In the interval, before the Parliament of 1907 was to meet, there were many speeches made in Great Britain and much indignation expended against the House of Lords. This was because the Peers had dealt so severely with the Education Bill that it ceased to be a Liberal measure and was dropped. There was not, indeed, unanimity on the Government side as to the best measures to be adopted for curbing the power of the House of Lords, the difficulty being that the Lords themselves could not be easily coerced to limit their power. But something must be done, it was admitted, and Mr. Lloyd George declared at Newcastle (23rd January) that privilege must be eliminated from the constitution, and that the fight must be no sham battle. Unless the Liberal Party meant to fight to a finish, it was worse than a farce to raise the question at all.[1]

In this fight Ireland had more than an academic interest, for the House of Lords had always been the enemy of Irish freedom. It had consistently opposed every concession made to Ireland, as it consistently championed landlord privilege and Protestant ascendancy; and wherever the Irish tenant and the Irish Catholic might look for sympathy, he had none to find in the House of Lords. But there were other questions of more pressing urgency in Ireland itself; and it was best to leave the enraged Liberals to deal with their hereditary legislators, the Irish Party being ready to help when the time came.

[1] *Times* report.

There was, for instance, the question of the grasslands to be distributed among the smaller tenants, whose holdings were so small as to be uneconomic. The Congested Board was doing its best, but its operations were too slow, and if greater progress were not made it would take a century to furnish the small farmer with sufficient land. In despair cattle-driving was resorted to, the grasslands being thus cleared. But the cattle and sheep were not slaughtered or maimed, though their owners were gravely inconvenienced, and if they refused to surrender the ranches they held they became unpopular, exposed to the consequences that such unpopularity brings. Their labourers might refuse to work for them, they were shunned by the people in public, their servants left them. But outrages on persons were uncommon, and were confined to a few specially disturbed districts.

To supply the Congested Board with more funds, so as to quicken its operations, would have soon ended the cattle-driving. But this was not the way even of a Liberal Government. There were sporadic prosecutions of the cattle-drivers, there was the quartering of extra police on certain districts, the awarding of compensation to aggrieved and injured graziers, and finally, the proclaiming of six counties under the Crimes Act—Clare, Galway, Leitrim, Roscommon, King's County, and Longford. The Government, however, had the good sense to ignore the Tory clamour for coercion and for the proclamation of the whole country under the Crimes Act. And this was done in spite of the exaggerated reports of Irish outrages with which Tory papers in England were filled.

Meantime, in the early days of 1907 a new Chief Secretary came to Ireland in the person of Mr. Birrell. His predecessor, Mr. Bryce, had been appointed Ambassador at Washington. Before he left for his new post he delivered two important speeches on questions deeply concerning Ireland. The first was at Newcastle (15th January), when he declared that his experience at Dublin Castle had strengthened his conviction that Home Rule must be conceded if Ireland was to be appeased. The Irish, he said, did not want separation. "Those in Ireland who desire separation are an insignificant minority; the great bulk of the

people have the common sense to know that they must continue linked with Great Britain. The idea of a serious movement in favour of separation is a mere chimera." He added, however, that the Government were not about to concede Home Rule, and hoped that the Irish Party would be content with something less.

His second speech was delivered at Dublin (25th January) and had reference to the University question. Some months previously a Royal Commission had been appointed to inquire into the income and general government of Trinity College. Two differing reports were the result of the inquiry. Some of the Commissioners recommended that other Colleges might be admitted to Dublin University as Constituent Colleges, having the same status as Trinity College. Other Commissioners would leave Trinity College as it was, without being associated with other Colleges. All admitted that it was satisfactory, as it stood, for Protestants, but entirely unsatisfactory for Catholics. On these reports Mr. Bryce proposed to set up at Dublin a Catholic University College, with a large income and well equipped. This, with Trinity College and the Queen's Colleges of Belfast and Cork, would be constituent colleges of the Dublin University. Galway College and the Arts Faculty of Maynooth College might be affiliated, and so might Magee College. But the friends of Trinity College were too strong for Mr. Bryce. They wanted that institution to remain, what it always had been, a citadel of ascendancy. Thus nothing was done until Mr. Bryce left Ireland. He had been sympathetic and well-meaning towards Ireland, but he left no monument of legislation behind him, and it remained for his successor, Mr. Birrell, to meet Irish demands.

In the session of 1907 not even an attempt was made to settle the University question, though all parties admitted that the question cried aloud for solution. And on the Home Rule question the Government was not only dilatory but insincere. At the opening of Parliament in February the King's Speech promised that during the session attention would be called to " measures for further associating the people of Ireland with the management of their domestic affairs, and for otherwise improving

the system of government in its administrative and financial aspects". Mr. Birrell was in favour of giving the Irish what every self-governing colony had: that was his larger policy. Meantime administrative and financial reform was urgent, and such reform would pave the way to Home Rule. Mr. Redmond was disappointed, as he understood that the Government pledges involved the concession of Home Rule at that session. He had reason for his disappointment when Mr. Birrell, on the 7th of May, introduced the Irish Councils Bill. It was a wretched substitute for Home Rule. "It did not authorize the levying of a single tax or the striking of a single rate", and it left the power of the British House of Commons entirely unimpaired.[1]

By its provisions an Irish Council of 107 members was to be set up, 84 elected by the local government electors, the others nominated by the Crown, the Chief Secretary as such occupying the chair. It was said that there were 45 different administrative boards in Ireland, but in reality there were 67,[2] and the new Council would take over only 8 of these. No doubt these eight departments were the most important, such as those dealing with education, primary and intermediate, the congested districts and public works, having an annual income of about £2,000,000. To this was to be added an annual grant of £650,000. Economic administration, such as might be expected from a purely Irish Council, mainly elective, and therefore in close touch with public opinion, ought to effect considerable savings, and the money saved could be profitably employed on Irish undertakings. But the resolutions of the Council—and it operated by resolutions—would be subject to revision and even annulment at the hands of the Lord-Lieutenant; and these resolutions would be further subject to be reviewed by Parliament. Mr. Balfour was not, indeed, an impartial critic; but much fault could not be found with his criticism when he asked if the Council was to be a benefit to the administration of the country, why should its activities be limited to eight departments? His description of the measure was that English and Scottish taxpayers were to provide £650,000 a year

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 117. [2] Dunraven's *Outlook in Ireland*, pp. 151–6.

to educate Irishmen in habits of self-respect, and at the same time to reduce Irish administration to a condition of chaos.

Mr. Birrell had not much enthusiasm for the Bill. As it conceded no legislative authority, he did not pretend it was a Home Rule measure, or even a substitute for such. But if it proved a success it might smooth the path of Home Rule, though if it turned out a failure it would be said that the Irish were not worthy of being trusted with powers of self-government.

As for the Irish Party, the rank and file had not been consulted, and most of them viewed the measure with disappointment. Mr. Redmond, however, had evidently been consulted, and so had some of the other leaders, and they had not disapproved. And this was his attitude when the Bill was introduced. It was not given as a substitute for Home Rule, and as it might be worked with success, and so furnish an argument for Home Rule, he would not take upon himself the responsibility of rejecting it. He would have the measure discussed by an Irish National Convention and wait until the verdict of this body was given.[1]

At that time of day it was certainly a poor measure to be proposed by a powerful Liberal Government. It was a mere shadow compared with either of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bills; and it fell far short of what Mr. Chamberlain then proposed:

1. To relieve the Imperial Parliament by devolution of Irish local business and to set it free for other and more important work.
2. To secure the free representation of Irish opinion in all matters of purely Irish concern.
3. To offer to Irishmen a fair field for legitimate local ambition and patriotism, and to bring back the attention of the Irish people, now diverted to a barren conflict in the Imperial Parliament, to the practical consideration of their own wants and necessities.
4. By removing all unnecessary interference with Irish government on the part of Great Britain to diminish the causes of irritation and the opportunity of collision.[2]

[1] *Hansard.* [2] Dunraven, pp. 225–6.

Even the Tories themselves were willing to go beyond Mr. Birrell's Bill. Mr. Wyndham, in 1902, appointed Sir Antony MacDonnell Irish Under-Secretary, both being agreed that there were too many Irish boards; that there should be administrative consolidation, and increase of existing grants for local purposes so as to reduce rates prohibitive of enterprise. Further, there was to be the development of transit for agricultural and other products. And for these contemplated reforms Mr. Wyndham had the approval of Mr. Balfour, then Prime Minister.[1]

The fact was that the Liberal Government was dominated by Liberal Imperialists like Mr. Asquith, who on the Irish question were Liberal Reactionaries. These gentlemen did not stand where they stood in 1886 or in 1892; their progress had been backward, like that of the crab, and while they had plenty of time and zeal to fight the House of Lords, they had neither time nor zeal to fight the wrongs of which Ireland so justly complained.

The Councils Bill, having passed its first reading, was then submitted, as Mr. Redmond said it would be, to an Irish National Convention held at Dublin on 21st May. At first it was hoped that the measure would mean almost the entire disappearance of Dublin Castle government, or at least a serious curtailment of its irresponsible powers, so that with popular control in administration Dublin Castle would cease to be what it had always been in the eyes of the people. This surely would be a great and beneficent change. For in Ireland Dublin Castle attracted as no other institution did the accumulated scorn and hate of ages. It had always been as the centuries passed, and without any change, the citadel and champion of oppression. From its doors virtue and honour fled. For the patriot it had nothing but chains and fetters, the headman's axe and the hangman's rope; while it took the spy and the informer and the renegade to its arms. The popular tribune who betrayed the people who had trusted him, the patriot lawyer turned renegade and place-hunter, the petty tyrant whose

[1] Dunraven, pp. 289–90—Letter of Mr. Wyndham to Sir A. MacDonnell.

only remedy for popular discontent was the whip and the dungeon, the calumniator of the land in which he was born, who hated the people's faith and scoffed at their virtues—all these turned for reward to Dublin Castle as the needle turns to the Pole. Shane O'Neill and Red Hugh and Hugh O'Neill, O'Hurley and the saintly Bishop of Down, Emmet and Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, were its enemies and its victims. And what a collection of men have been those who have ruled within its walls! Mountjoy and Carew, Parsons and Borlase and Ireton, Clare and Castlereagh, Carhampton and Lake—what a procession of miscreants, and how their memories are and have been execrated by Irishmen in every land in which an Irishman has found a home.

In addition to being constantly opposed to popular opinion, Dublin Castle administration was the most inefficient and the most expensive to be found. It was a government by departments, unrepresentative and irresponsible, presided over by a Chief Secretary who knew nothing about Ireland, manned by officials who were always anti-Irish and generally anti-Catholic, and whose salaries were out of all proportion to the work they did. It was the most expensive government of which we know. "Head for head the government of Ireland costs more than the government of any civilized community on the whole face of the earth. Under it there is no security whatever against absolute waste and misapplication of money." [1]

There was ample material for rejoicing in the prospect that this anachronism, this satire on democratic government, should disappear; it would be matter for congratulation if it were even partially reformed.

But a more thorough examination of the Councils Bill showed that there was to be no serious reform. Indeed the departments to be handed over to the proposed National Council were, in part at least, already in touch with public opinion and amenable to it. This was certainly true of the National Education Board, through its inspectors and managers of schools; and of the Congested

[1] Dunraven, p. 156.

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Districts Board, because of the diversity of character and interests of these members. It was to a larger extent true of the Department of Agriculture and of Technical Instruction, which had in association with it an elective advisory council. As for such minor departments as the National and the Royal Academy of Music, reform mattered little. It was, however, of great importance to bring under popular control such a great spending department as the Board of Works, always wasteful and inefficient; and the Local Government Board also exercised important powers, though in this case a radical change had already been effected by the Local Government Act.

But all control was still withheld, of the Prisons Department, the Fisheries Department, the General Valuation Department. The offices in the Law Courts involving wasteful expenditure were not to be touched, nor the Registration Office, nor the College of Science. Dublin Castle government would still control the Chief Secretary's and Treasury Remembrances Office, the State Paper Office, the Loan Fund Board, the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks, and the Inspectors of Factories. Nor would the new Council be allowed to interfere with the Customs or Inland Revenue, or with the Post Office. In all these departments large salaries, large pensions, promotion by favour rather than by merit, waste, extravagance, and inefficiency would still continue. There was, then, reason for Mr. Balfour's objection that if it was good to hand over some departments to the New Administrative Council, it ought to be good to hand over the other departments as well. Such a halting and grudging measure of reform from a Liberal Government receiving Home Rule votes and professing, even nominally, Home Rule principles, excited deep disappointment in the ranks of Irish Nationalists. Mr. Healy condemned the measure at once and emphatically; others in Ireland followed his example; and before Mr. Redmond came to Dublin for the Convention he had heard the rumblings of the coming storm.

It was a representative assembly which met in the Mansion House on the 21st May. There were in all 3000 present, priests,

members of Parliament, county and district and urban councillors, United League and Hibernian delegates, men who directed local political movements and could suitably speak for the people. On many subjects they might differ, but on the merits of the Councils Bill there was little difference of opinion. For the Bill was universally condemned. If the Liberal Party wanted Irish support, or meant to satisfy Irish opinion, let them stand where Gladstone stood. Half measures were not wanted and would not be accepted.

Satisfied as to what the popular verdict was, Mr. Redmond himself rose and moved the rejection of the Bill. He declared that nothing could satisfy Irish National aspirations but a measure giving the Irish people complete control of their own domestic affairs. He had been willing to give every reasonable consideration to any scheme leading up to the larger policy to which British Liberals were pledged, but he was satisfied that the Councils Bill was utterly inadequate in its scope, unsatisfactory in its details, and deserving of rejection by the Irish nation, and that no mere half measures would suffice to satisfy public opinion. They must have a native Parliament, with an executive responsible to it and with power over purely Irish affairs. He was careful to say that the Bill had not been submitted to the Nationalist leaders when it was being drafted, but only when it had taken its final shape. Then he objected to its provisions, especially to the manner in which the proposed Council was to be constituted; but all the amendments he suggested under this head were rejected. To the charge of having even tolerated the Bill on its introduction, he replied that its sudden rejection might be open to criticism as having deprived the people of a boon. Finally he promised that the Irish Party would press for a University Bill and an Evicted Tenants Bill. Nor could there be any alliance with the Liberals until they retraced their steps and stood where Gladstone stood. Mr. Redmond's motion was carried, and the Convention proved to be unanimous in rejecting the Councils Bill.[1]

With the Irish Party hostile the Bill could not be proceeded

[1] *Freeman's Journal* report.

with, and it was withdrawn, the Prime Minister declaring that it deserved a better fate.[1] Nor would the Government bring in the long-promised University Bill, though the Irish members were assured that the matter was being seriously considered, and that legislation would come in the next session. Before the end of the existing session, however, an Evicted Tenants Bill was passed through the House of Commons, but so changed for the worse in the House of Lords that Mr. Redmond refused to accept it, and he and his party walked out of the House. The emasculated and worthless Bill was then accepted by Mr. Birrell; and this was all the Irish Party could bring back to Ireland as the fruit of their labour for the year 1907.[2]

Parliamentary action was becoming discredited in Ireland, and Mr. Redmond, feeling that he was losing ground, considered that something should be done to impress the people. This took the form of a Manifesto to the Irish People, signed by all the members of the Irish Party and issued in June.[3] As an explanation for having voted for the Liberals at the General Election, and since then having voted with them in Parliament, it was pointed out that the only alternative was to vote for the Unionists, who were pledged against Home Rule and in favour of coercion, and who wanted to reduce the Irish representation in Parliament. The Liberals had been misled by their friends in Ireland and would do better the next time. In any event the rejection of the Councils Bill had brought the Irish question to the front. All that was required was that the Irish people should be united and in earnest, and the Government would soon be compelled to bring in a far better measure than the discredited and rejected Councils Bill. As an earnest of their determination, the Irish members refused to accept the Evicted Tenants Bill as amended by the House of Lords, and they opposed the Liberal candidate at Jarrow, with the result that the seat went to the Labour candidate.

This outburst of firmness and independence did not last. Nor did it make much impression on either side of the Irish Sea. Mr. Stead who could hardly be called a party man, though much

[1] *Hansard.* [2] *Hansard*, Aug. 27. [3] *Freeman's Journal*, June 12.

more of a Liberal than a Conservative, and always friendly to Ireland, had nothing better to suggest than to set up a Constitutional Convention to draw up a Home Rule measure, though he did not suggest that this should be done at once. Nor would such a proposal find any favour with the Liberal leaders.[1] The Nationalist leaders gave no support to Mr. Ginnell, M.P. for Westmeath, in his advocacy of cattle-driving as a means of procuring the breaking up of the grasslands. When English Tory papers published reports of outrages in Ireland, all of them grossly and shamefully exaggerated, these Irish leaders were needlessly apologetic. And while they declared their determination to hold aloof from both English parties, they continued on the friendliest terms with the Liberal leaders and supported their measures in Parliament.

Mr. Redmond, indeed, wanted to be taken as in deadly earnest; and Sir F. C. Gould had a cartoon in the *Westminster Gazette* picturing him as a fierce-looking Cromwell, jack-boots, feathered hat, sword and all, and with a more ferocious looking expression of countenance than Cromwell ever wore. Mr. Redmond asks Miss Erin, who stands looking on admiringly: " Do I look great and virile now?" and the lady answers: " Shure, Mr. Redmond, it's trembling in their shoes the tyrants will be when they see you ".[2] Some of his own followers were just as sceptical as the English cartoonist, believing that all Mr. Redmond's talk of winning Home Rule " by hard fighting and by a vigorous and well-sustained agitation in Ireland " meant little. Sir Thomas Esmonde in a public letter refused any more to look to Parliament for redress, satisfied that it had no sense of justice where Ireland was concerned, and would never grant Home Rule. Mr. Dolan, M.P. for Leitrim, agreed with this view, and Mr. O'Meara, M.P., utterly disgusted, resigned his seat in Parliament.

This despair of Parliamentary action had already found tangible expression in Ireland in the formation of a new movement under the name of Sinn Fein. As its name implies, Sinn Fein being Irish for " ourselves ", was founded on self-reliance and

[1] *Review of Reviews*, 1907. [2] *Review of Reviews*, 1907.

aimed at the regeneration of Ireland from within. In the words of its Constitution: " The object of Sinn Fein is the establishment of the Independence of Ireland.

" The aim of the Sinn Fein policy is to unite Ireland on this broad National platform: 1st. That we are a distinct nation. 2nd. That we will not make any voluntary agreement with Great Britain until Great Britain keeps her own compact which she made by the Renunciation Act of 1783, which enacted that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by his Majesty and the Parliament of that kingdom is hereby declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable. 3rd. That we are determined to make use of any powers we have, or may have at any time in the future, to work for our own advancement, and for the creation of a prosperous, virile, and independent nation.

" That the people of Ireland are a free people, and that no law made without their authority or consent is, or ever can be, binding on their conscience.

" That the General Council of County Councils presents the nucleus of a national authority, and we urge upon it to extend the scope of its deliberation and action, to take within its purlieu every question of national interest, and to formulate lines of procedure for the nation.

" That national self-development through the recognition of the duties and rights of citizenship on the part of the individual and by the aid and support of all movements originating from within Ireland, instinct with national tradition and not looking outside Ireland for the accomplishment of their aims, is vital to Ireland."

A national Government in Ireland was what Sinn Fein aimed at, and pending this being established, the County Councils and other elective bodies throughout the country were to give a preference to Irish manufactures and Irish produce, thus establishing what was really a protective system against foreign goods. The same authorities were to use their powers in establishing an Irish

consular service, thus getting Irish goods a foreign market, and also in establishing an Irish mercantile marine. In the same way the mineral resources of the country could be ascertained and developed; there could be a national bank and a national stock exchange, a national civil service and a national insurance system. Voluntary effort could do these things if there was co-operation and self-reliance, though it was not so easy to see how County Councils could control and regulate transit by road, rail, and water, nor control the sea fisheries. It was, however, quite possible to encourage the teaching of the Irish language and of Irish history in the schools; and it was quite possible for the people to abstain " as far as practicable " from the consumption of articles paying duty to the British Exchequer. And there need not be any voluntary support to the British armed forces. A further item in the Sinn Fein programme was the abolition of the workhouses, to be replaced by a system of out-door relief for the aged and infirm, and the employment of the able-bodied in the reclamation of waste lands, afforestation, and other useful works.

As England's right to legislate for Ireland was denied, it followed that the Irish members were to be withdrawn from Westminster, and were, instead, to be members of a national assembly sitting periodically at Dublin, regulating Irish national concerns, and armed with moral authority which came from the free choice of the people.

Emphasis was laid on the necessity for cultivating temperance and good relations between all Irishmen for the common good.[1]

All this looked visionary, dreams that could never take the shape of hard facts; but if Parliamentary effort continued to produce no fruit, as it had been doing, Irishmen would turn to self-reliance and Sinn Fein. And before men scoffed at what voluntary effort, springing from intense national feeling, could accomplish, they might look at Bohemia and see what the Czechs had been able to do.

[1] *The Irish Year Book*, 1909, pp. 358–9. Copy of Sinn Fein Constitution.

CHAPTER II

Leaders and Parties

The great question that occupied the attention of Irish parties and politicians in 1908 was Home Rule. Other questions of importance there were, such as land, local government, and education, but all these were subsidiary to Home Rule. All these could be settled more in accordance with local requirements and with fuller knowledge by a Parliament sitting in Dublin than by the Parliament which sat at Westminster. It was this question which was the determining factor at elections; and if in North-East Ulster a candidate professed Home Rule principles, he was quite certain to be defeated, no matter how conspicuous his capacity for Parliamentary work might be. South of the Boyne and in the remaining portion of Ulster, he had no chance if Home Rule were not inscribed on his banners.

But the Home Ruler was not a separatist, for he desired that Ireland should remain united with England; and he was a constitutionalist because he believed that Home Rule could be won by Parliamentary methods, by speeches and arguments and votes. North-East Ulster, on the other hand, with Belfast as its rallying centre, having opposed the Legislative Union of 1800, had now become rabidly Unionist, shrieking out that Home Rule meant separation from the British Empire, that it meant Rome Rule, the practical enthronement of the Pope in Protestant Ulster. Those who wanted an Irish Parliament were but rebels and traitors.

It is quite true that in Mr. Parnell's time there was agitation which differed little from rebellion. Nor had Mr. Parnell himself any special affection for the British Empire; he would gladly have

seen Ireland a separated and independent nation. And if he had recourse to Parliamentary action, it was the only weapon he could use with effect. He welcomed the aid of the physical-force men so as to keep up pressure in Ireland; and in Parliament his method was to be independent of each of the great English parties, but ready to utilize either if only Home Rule could be won. His successors were vastly inferior men and played the Parliamentary game with vastly inferior skill.

Since 1900 Mr. John Redmond was chairman of the Irish Party, having been elected in the usual way at the opening of each session of Parliament. He was then nearly thirty years in Parliament, a fluent speaker, a ready debater, well versed in Parliamentary procedure, with oratorical gifts which placed him in the very first rank in the House of Commons. But for a successful leader of an Irish party his limitations were considerable. In his earlier days he did not disdain the aid of the physical-force party, and at the time of the Parnell split he boasted that the "hill-side men", which was another name for Fenians, were on his side. But in 1908 he was a sober constitutionalist, his faith in "hill-side men" gone. He professed, like Parnell, to be entirely independent of English parties, and in the years after the fall of Parnell he poured scorn on the Anti-Parnellites because of their subserviency to the Liberals. But in 1908 he was himself in alliance with the Liberals, supporting their measures, though getting nothing in return. He made eloquent speeches in Parliament, he used convincing arguments, he protested against Ireland being neglected and ignored by the Liberal leaders; but he did not oppose them except perfunctorily, and his burst of independence was over so soon that it was regarded as destitute of earnestness or reality.

The fact was that Mr. Redmond was not a strong man, and had largely got out of touch with Irish opinion. He filled badly the rôle of a militant politician, but was effective where conciliation was useful. His manners were those of a gentleman; he was ready to compromise with opponents and to join with them in the common purpose of serving Ireland. He was one of those who

took part in the work of the Recess Committee and in the Financial Relations Committee, acting with such men as Horace Plunkett, the Unionist, and Colonel Saunderson, the leader of the Orangemen. He took part in the Land Conference of 1902, again acting with Unionists, and he welcomed the Land Act of 1903, and wished to have it work rapidly. Nor can there be any doubt that he wished further co-operation with Unionists, if only such co-operation would eventuate in measures of reform. He was not a man who desired to speak harshly of his political opponents, or attribute to them unworthy motives. It was in this direction his capacity as a leader lay; and if he were allowed to follow his own unfettered judgment he might have, during Mr. Wyndham's term of office (1902–5), succeeded in effecting a settlement of such thorny and difficult questions as those of University education and the over-taxation of Ireland. But his position was a difficult one. He had been chosen chairman of the reunited Irish Party, though he was leader of a small minority, and he did not therefore command the enthusiastic allegiance of the whole party of which he was chairman. Nor were his difficulties lessened, but rather increased, by the conduct of Mr. Dillon.

Like Mr. Redmond himself, Mr. Dillon had a long experience of Irish politics, and, like Mr. Redmond, he was a man of education and ability. But he was not a man with whom co-operation was easy, for he was mutinous as a follower and intolerant as a leader. He was conceited and vain, fond of popular applause, obstinate in his opinions, unconciliatory towards his opponents, always wanting to be in the first place; and not even the Hohenzollerns were more convinced than he was that he had a divine right to rule. He attacked Mr. Butt for negotiating with English ministers; he attacked the Land Bill of 1881 and wanted to have it rejected; and he declared that "he would never follow any leader who would not tolerate difference of opinion".[1] In accordance with this declaration he differed with Mr. Parnell in 1882, wishing to keep up the land agitation at fever heat, while Parnell judged that moderation was then the wiser course. Declining to give way,

[1] *Freeman's Journal*, Oct. 12, 1881.

Mr. Dillon left Ireland for America and did not return until 1885.[1]

Again, in 1886 Mr. Dillon started the Plan of Campaign without consulting Mr. Parnell, and indeed in opposition to Mr. Parnell's wishes. Nor did he consult his party, with the result that though the tenants scored some victories they also suffered many defeats, and the Crimes Act of 1887 found its way to the Statute Book. This it was which caused the Bishops to address a remonstrance to Mr. Parnell against "the independent action of individual members of the party in originating and sustaining movements involving the gravest consequences, political, social, and moral, without the sanction of the party as such".[2] This letter was written by Cardinal Logue in October, 1890, and was specially aimed at such movements as the Plan of Campaign. In 1882 Parnell was too strong for Mr. Dillon, but in 1890 Parnell's authority could be defied.

When Parnell disappeared Mr. Dillon felt satisfied, no doubt quite honestly, that he himself was the only Irishman living who was qualified to take Parnell's place. This appeared during the Boulogne negotiations, as it appeared after Mr. Parnell's death, in his controlling of the *Freeman's Journal*, in his management of party funds, in the selection of candidates for Parliament. When he had succeeded in getting the threads of the whole national movement in his hands, Mr. MacCarthy was displaced from the chairmanship of the party in 1896, and Mr. Dillon was appointed to the vacant place. Then there was a transformation. The man who declared in 1881 that if you sent angels into Parliament, unless they were controlled by a public body sitting in Dublin, they would betray the people,[3] now wanted no opposition and no criticism from any such body, or even from any individual. "We in the Irish Party", he said in 1897, "can't bear criticism", an extraordinary statement for a popular leader to make. There were some even within the party, men like Mr. Healy, who were not willing to place either the party or its chairman beyond the

[1] Barry O'Brien's *Parnell*, i, 375–6.
[2] Healy, *Why Ireland is not Free*, pp. 26–7.
[3] *Freeman's Journal*, Aug. 30, 1881.

reach of criticism, and for these Mr. Dillon's wrath was specially reserved. While he protested that he was patient and long-suffering, tolerant and forbearing, his speeches were full of threats against those either inside or outside the party who dared to find fault with anything he said or did. The newspapers of 1896–7 and 1898 were full of his speeches, and in every speech the personal note was struck. He would have submission to his authority; he spoke for the party, was its authorized head and the exponent of its policy; and he would insist, for the good of Ireland, in having unity and majority rule. These threats, however, were not effective. Men were driven out of the party; men were deprived of sustenance from the party funds; men who were able and willing to do good work for Ireland were treated as if they were public enemies. But the voice of criticism could not be silenced, and in 1900 there was such discontent within the party, and such disgust throughout the country, that Mr. Dillon himself recognized his own incapacity and resigned the chair.

When Mr. Redmond became chairman Mr. Dillon reverted to his early rôle of critic, and had no intention of accepting Mr. Redmond's view if it did not coincide with his own. Refusing to co-operate with Tories, even when good might accrue to Ireland, Mr. Dillon belittled the Local Government Act of 1898, because it came from the Tories. He refused to join the Land Conference of 1902, and when it eventuated in the Land Purchase Act of 1903, Mr. Dillon found so much fault with the Act, and predicted so many evils for purchasers under its provisions, that sales proceeded at a rate unexpectedly slow.[1]

Mr. Wyndham was anxious to serve Ireland, and if he had been encouraged by the Irish Party, might have settled the University question, and perhaps effected radical administrative changes in Ireland. But in Mr. Dillon's view nothing good could come from a Tory, and so it was left for Mr. Birrell to present Ireland with the National Councils Bill. Bad as this was, it was not rejected by Mr. Dillon, because it was a Liberal measure. If it had been introduced by the Tories, he would instantly have

[1] Speech at Ballaghadereen, Oct. 8, 1904.

rejected it with scorn. Mr. Redmond would have had no difficulty in co-operating with Sir Horace Plunkett and Lord Dunraven. But Mr. Dillon described the policy of conciliation as a policy of swindling,[1] and Mr. Dillon was sustained by the *Freeman's Journal*, which was the party organ, and he had a majority of the party also, who were his nominees and his creatures. And if he took the field against Mr. Redmond, as he threatened to do, there would have been another split; and from such a prospect, with his experience of the Parnell split, Mr. Redmond drew back in horror.

Though he showed no desire at any time for the chair of the Irish Party, and was quite content to support Mr. Dillon's measures, Mr. T. P. O'Connor was a much abler man than Mr. Dillon. He had won such distinction as a journalist, having reached the very highest position in his profession, it was sometimes forgotten that he had long Parliamentary experience and was a powerful Parliamentary debater. And he was equally effective as a platform orator, marshalling his arguments with great skill, able to clothe his thoughts in highly felicitous language, and with an ingratiating manner and delivery which speedily put him on good terms with his audience. Had Mr. O'Connor joined either of the great English parties he would probably have attained Cabinet rank. But he had a certain fondness for Ireland, though away from the country, a desire to devote at least some of his talents to her service, and he remained as he began a member of the Irish Party. He lived in London and loved the big city, he consorted chiefly with English men of letters and politicians, he wrote for English newspapers, as he established and controlled newspapers which were addressed to English readers and written from an English standpoint.

It was not easy to do all this and be a militant member of the Irish Party. But Mr. O'Connor's agility was equal to the task. If he sat for an English constituency, it was by the votes of Irishmen —the Irishmen of Liverpool, who were as intensely Irish as those at home. He was President of the United Irish League of Great

[1] William O'Brien's *The Irish Party—who they are, and what they have done.*

Britain; and thus in touch with the Irish voters in Great Britain he was able to influence them at elections. Mr. Dillon might be accurately described as a Liberal born in Ireland, and living in Ireland, and anxious that the Irish members of Parliament should always be ready to support Liberal measures. Mr. O'Connor wanted to utilize the Irish voters in the same direction; he was really an English Liberal himself, with an Irish name and posing as an Irish Nationalist, and probably it was on this account he was always on the side of Mr. Dillon.

One other prominent supporter Mr. Dillon could rely on, a man with much greater influence with the Irish at home than Mr. O'Connor had. This was Mr. Joseph Devlin, a native of Belfast, a man with a great gift of eloquence, sprung from the people and anxious to help to better their condition, and with great powers of organization. He was not a man of much education and of extensive reading like Mr. O'Connor, but he could reach the masses more easily and was more effective on a public platform. And with great political insight he made use of an existing organization to further his political ends.

This was the Ancient Order of Hibernians. As far back as the sixteenth century there were associations formed for the defence of Irishmen menaced with the loss of both faith and liberty. There were in the eighteenth century the Whiteboys and the Defenders, and in the nineteenth the Threshers and Ribbonmen and Fenians, to name but a few. Most if not all of these were secret societies, and it was here that the Ancient Order of Hibernians differed from them. At what particular time it assumed the name by which it became so well known in subsequent times cannot easily be ascertained. It certainly existed in Ireland in 1836, for in that year we find the following reply given to an invitation from the Irish Catholics in America:

"Brothers, greeting—Be it known to you and to all whom it may concern that we send to our few brothers in New York full instructions with our authority to establish branches of our society in America. The qualifications for membership must be as follows: All the members must be Catholic and Irish, or of

Irish descent, and of good moral character, and none of your members shall join any secret society contrary to the laws of the Catholic Church; and at all times and in all places your motto shall be ' Friendship, Unity, and True Christian Charity '."

Making progress at first in America, discord set in, and the society broke up into two—" The Ancient Order of Hibernians of the Board of Erin " and " The Ancient Order of Hibernians of America ".[1]

Arbitration brought about a settlement, and the reunited organization, bearing the name of " The Ancient Order of Hibernians of America ", made such rapid progress that in 1908 there were 127,000 members, and in the Ladies' Auxiliary, a branch for women only, there were 50,000 members. Acting up to the motto of Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity, the society became a powerful instrument for good towards its members; and in twenty-four years a sum of 8,000,000 dollars was paid for sick and funeral benefits, and 4,500,000 dollars for various charities. A sum of 50,000 dollars was expended in founding an Irish Chair in the Catholic University at Washington.

Meantime the society had not prospered in Ireland, but had indeed become extinct; and now in the twentieth century Mr. Devlin and others determined that it should be revived under the name of " The Ancient Order of Hibernians of the Board of Erin ". There was ample room for such an association, and its declared objects corresponded with those of the American society. These were relief in sickness, funeral benefits, endowments for children, pensions for the aged. Nor could any fault be found with the qualifications for membership. These were that one must be between sixteen and seventy years of age, of sound health, of Irish birth or descent, and a practical Catholic. Finally, there was an entrance fee of one shilling, and regular monthly payments. Such a society deserved to be supported. Nor was it matter for condemnation, especially as the society began its operations in Ulster, that the members should cultivate a national spirit and be prepared to defend Catholic rights whenever these were assailed.

[1] Article in *Catholic Encyclopedia.*

And a purely defensive Catholic organization would find scope for its activities in the midst of the ascendancy and bigotry of the Ulster Orangemen.[1]

But the society soon ceased to be a mere friendly society, and rapidly developed into a political organization. In North-East Ulster, where Orangemen are in the majority, Catholics are excluded from all positions of honour and emolument because of their faith; and if the Hibernians, as defenders of their fellow-Catholics, had protested against such conduct and exposed it, good work would have been done. But the organization was not defensive but aggressive, and in Ulster and elsewhere their main concern was to obtain places and positions for their members. They became rural and urban and county councillors and members of corporations. They got appointments under the Local Government Board, such as those of doctors, relieving officers, and clerks of unions. In a short time the organization spread so rapidly and became so powerful that its members and their friends got seats in Parliament. Many, no doubt, were attracted to the Hibernian Order because of its declared charitable and beneficent objects, but the greater number were attracted because of the prospect held out of getting positions.

At first no Government positions were sought; indeed none could be got for Irish Catholic and Irish Nationalist from a Tory Government. But when the Liberals were in power the turn of the Hibernian came. Mr. Devlin's ability soon raised him to the position of a leader in the Irish Party, and the Irish Party, having forgotten the lessons of the past, were in alliance with the Liberals. Sometimes, indeed, the Irish Nationalist members differed from the Liberals, sometimes they complained, sometimes they even voted against the Government, but they had really ceased to be an independent party. And from the Government which they ought to have opposed they solicited and obtained positions for their friends.

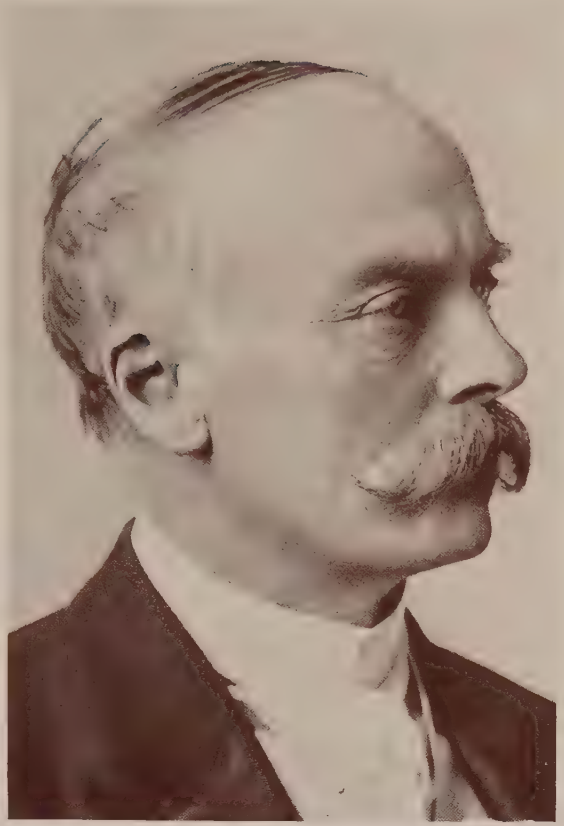
In all this Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin were in accord. Holding in their hands the threads of the two organizations, the Ancient

[1] *Rules of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.*

Order of Hibernians and the United Irish League, they controlled conventions for the selection of members of Parliament; they manned the councils; they had their friends returned at local elections for salaried positions; they had their political friends put on the bench. The pretence was made of consulting the people; but in reality public opinion was machined, and nobody was supported for place or position or dignity except a Hibernian or a member of the United Irish League. There were occasional protests, but those who protested were abused in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal*, which was the Irish Party organ, and in addition were abused by Mr. Dillon at some public meeting as cranks and factionists.

Mr. Devlin was more straightforward than Mr. Dillon. If his political and personal friends got offices from the Government, and sometimes the very highest positions, he protested that they ought to have got them; that such positions had been too long reserved for enemies of the people; that much depended on a sympathetic administration of the law; and that it was better to have the government of the country in the hands of Nationalists and Catholics than in the hands of Tories and Protestant bigots. Mr. Dillon, on the other hand, protested that there was a rule of the Irish Party prohibiting any of the members from seeking any office from the Government, no matter whether it was Liberal or Tory, and that in such appointments he himself never interfered. But the candidate for such offices always found that it was of the very first importance to be recommended by Mr. Dillon, and that whoever had such recommendation usually got the vacant place. And Mr. Birrell in his evidence before the Hardinge Commission in 1916 declared that for many years past he had, as Chief Secretary, consulted Mr. Dillon and deferred to his view.

Mr. William O'Brien for a good part of his public life had been in close co-operation with Mr. Dillon. He shared his fortunes during the Plan of Campaign fight and during the Boulogne negotiations with Parnell. He joined with him in attacking Mr. Healy, and in putting Mr. Dillon himself into the chair of the Irish Party; and when he wrote his novel *When we were Boys* he



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dedicated it to Mr. Dillon "in memory of anxious years and glorious hopes". But in 1902 they had reached the parting of the ways. Mr. O'Brien was one of those who joined in the Land Conference, and was rejoiced that co-operation between Conservative and Nationalist, between landlord and tenant, produced the Wyndham Land Act of 1903. Henceforth he believed firmly that conciliation and compromise, resulting from similar conferences, would be the surest road to reform. If warring Irishmen had been brought together in conference, they might surely be brought together again; and if the Land question was found not to be insoluble, neither would the Education question nor the Home Rule question. And a solution found round a table, at which opposing and clashing interests were represented, would certainly be better than the coercion of the Nationalist majority or the coercion of the Orangemen of Belfast.

It was not that Mr. O'Brien shrank from danger or suffering, for he had often been in jail, and was prepared to go again if necessary. He was a militant politician who gave and took hard blows, and in his public life his sufferings and sacrifices were far greater than those of Mr. Dillon. But, like many other good fighting men, he learned to respect his opponents, because they were his countrymen and loved Ireland. His views broadened and became more generous as the years advanced; he ceased to have any sympathy with the narrow and intolerant partisanship of Mr. Dillon; and he was so annoyed with Mr. Dillon for his attacks on the Land Conference and on the Wyndham Land Act that, in 1904, he resigned his seat for Cork City and had the satisfaction of being re-elected, thus getting the approval of his constituents for his conduct. Mr. O'Brien resented bitterly Mr. Dillon's attacks on men like Mr. Wyndham and Lord Dunraven, believing that these men meant well for Ireland and deserved kindness and encouragement at the hands of Irish Nationalists. For these reasons Mr. O'Brien gradually drifted away from the Irish Party, and at the General Election of 1906 he and a few of his political friends were returned as Independent Nationalists.

The ablest of these was Mr. Timothy Healy. Less emotional than Mr. O'Brien, he looked chiefly for results, and finding that Mr. Dillon's methods of denunciation and proscription only exasperated opponents and produced no legislative results, he favoured Mr. O'Brien's policy of conciliation and compromise, and heartily welcomed the Land Act of 1903. Like Mr. O'Brien, he wanted to smooth the path of land purchase, anxious that landlordism should for ever cease and that the tenants should become prospective owners of their farms. Mr. Healy distrusted many of the Liberal leaders, and time has amply vindicated him. He wanted real and not sham independent opposition, friendliness and votes for any English party which was friendly to Ireland, and opposition for any party which would deny Ireland's claims.

The meaner spirits of the Irish Party, thinking that they were earning the goodwill of Mr. Dillon, freely flung at Mr. Healy the epithets of crank and factionist and place-hunter, and even traitor. But Mr. O'Brien knew well that Mr. Healy was neither a factionist nor a traitor, and had never sought place for himself or his friends; while those who were his critics and his assailants sought and obtained Government positions for their friends. And Mr. O'Brien's knowledge that such was the case must have had a powerful effect in bringing himself and Mr. Healy together.

As for the rank and file of the Irish Party, they were very poor material indeed. Men like Sir Thomas Esmonde, Captain Donnellon, Mr. Hugh Law, and a very few others, were men of some means, and therefore lifted above want; they were men of education, and therefore on a level with English and Scottish members. The remaining Irish members were in great part small shopkeepers, farmers, journalists of a poor type, proprietors of local newspapers, and others whom it would be difficult to classify. Not a few were men of little character who, after having failed to fill any position with success, had taken to politics for a living. In Ireland their chief business was to organize public meetings at which praise was showered on the Irish Party for all it had done and would yet do; to have their friends at District and County Councils pass votes of confidence in the Irish leaders;

to write or to have written in local journals of the work being done in Parliament for Ireland; to deprecate, and even harshly condemn, any attempt at criticism aimed at members of Parliament or their policy; and to cover with coarse insults Mr. Healy and his friends as rebels against unity and majority rule.

Such men as these were listened to in Parliament with scant respect, and commanded no influence there. They spoke without preparation and without knowledge. Uneducated they began and uneducated they remained. They lounged in the smoke-room of the House of Commons, they frequented the bar, they read novels or newspapers. But they made no effort to improve themselves, made no serious study of any subject; they pored over no Blue books in preparation for debate; they were utterly unable to grapple with questions of finance, or influence the character of legislation. They left such matters to Mr. Redmond, or Mr. Dillon, or Mr. Devlin; and when they intervened in debate it was chiefly to get themselves mentioned in the newspapers and attract the notice of their constituents. They were quite ready to follow their leaders into the Liberal lobbies, and were quite willing to get Government offices for their friends. Such was the Home Rule army doing battle for Ireland in the British Parliament.

The opposing hosts were the Unionists, recruited chiefly from Ulster, with their head-quarters at Belfast. Of the total Irish members they were a small minority, and they were not a majority even in Ulster; for they numbered but 18 in all, and of these 2 were from Trinity College and 1 from South Dublin, so that they counted only 15 of the 33 Ulster members. But what they lacked in numbers they had in audacity. They boasted that they were the only loyal people in Ireland, the 85 Nationalists being only rebels and traitors. They pointed to the linen manufactures and the shipyards of Belfast as evidence of their superiority in the industrial field. They claimed to be more enlightened and more educated than their countrymen of the other provinces. They were the guardians and defenders of civil and religious liberty, and recalled how they had defeated James II, thus delivering Ireland from Popery, brass money, and wooden shoes.

The fact was that these Ulster Orangemen still lived in the seventeenth century, with all its bigotry and intolerance. They wanted liberty for themselves, but would deny it to their Nationalist fellow-countrymen. Their religion was not the religion of Christ, which was founded on love; it was nothing more than hatred of Catholicism; and their religious zeal was shown by the energy with which they cursed the Pope. In their factories and shipyards they insulted their Catholic fellow-workers, and often assaulted them, solely because of their faith; and they opposed Home Rule because it would put the Catholics on a level with themselves. The Ulster capitalists encouraged these hatreds, because it diverted the attention of their Protestant workmen from such subjects as work and wages and the conditions under which the labourers lived. The reactionaries in Church and State wanted no union of North and South, because this would mean concession and reform, an enlarging of the bounds of freedom. As for the politicians, they regarded the Ulster farmer and the Ulster workman as necessary allies if ascendancy and privilege were to be maintained. Hence the strange spectacle was to be seen in Ulster, which could not be seen elsewhere, of the farmer and his labourer, the capitalist and the workman, the greedy employer and the girl living on starvation wages, all fighting under the same flag.

For many years previous to his death, in 1906, Colonel Saunderson, M.P. for Armagh, had been the leader of the Ulster Unionists. He was a landlord, with a landlord's prejudices, a Protestant who clung to Protestant ascendancy, a Tory quite ready to hurl accusations of treason against the Irish Nationalists. But he had the Irishman's wit and humour; he was not personally offensive towards his opponents, and he protested vigorously against the overtaxation of Ireland. When he died he was regretted by all parties in the House of Commons, and by none more sincerely than by the Irish Nationalist members, whom he had so often assailed.

His successor as leader of the Unionists was Sir Edward Carson, and the difference between the two men was happily put by

Mr. Stead, when he said that Colonel Saunderson was a gentleman, but that Sir Edward Carson was only a lawyer.[1] He might have added that he was a highly successful lawyer. Before he was forty he was Solicitor-General for Ireland. Then he went to the English Bar, and became Solicitor-General for England in 1900. Meantime he had entered Parliament, and had sat continuously for Trinity College, Dublin, since 1892. While a junior barrister he had attracted the notice of Mr. Arthur Balfour, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and had been employed by him in many coercion prosecutions; and the patronage and personal friendship of Mr. Balfour had no doubt helped him to rapid promotion. But the legal knowledge and the capacity to win his case were not wanting, and Sir Edward Carson's clients were not confined to any one political party. Recognition came from all parties, the recognition that he was one of the greatest advocates of his time.

In 1893 Mr. T. P. O'Connor described Carson, with the prejudice of an Irish Nationalist for an Irish Crown prosecutor, whose work lay so much within the gloomy portals of Green Street Courthouse, and to whom success meant sending Irish patriots to the convict cell or to the scaffold. "I confess", he says, "I never see him pass without an internal shudder. Just as the sight of an abbé gave M. Homair in *Madame Bovary* an unpleasant whiff of the winding sheet, there is something in the whole appearance of Mr. Carson that conveys to me the dank smell of the prison and the suffocating sense of the scaffold." Certainly Mr. Carson was at his best in sending patriots to their doom. "In all such squalid tragedies, men of the Carson type are a necessary portion of the machinery, as necessary as the informer that betrays, as the warder who locks the door, as the hangman who coils the rope." And Mr. O'Connor describes Carson's personal appearance, the long black-coloured jaws, the protruding mouth, the cavernous eyes looking as if he belonged to the eighteenth century and had come from a consultation with Lord Castlereagh.[2]

It has been the misfortune of Ireland that in every age some of her children have been found ready to plant a dagger in her

[1] *Review of Reviews*, 1906. [2] *Sketches in the House*, pp. 92–5.

heart. This happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it happened in 1798 and in 1800; and among those who have left memories to be execrated in after times Carson is one of the most sinister figures. Born in Leinster, the son of a Connaught mother, he has necessarily been brought into contact with Irish Catholics and has seen their toleration and kindliness towards their Protestant neighbours, and yet he has spoken of them as if they wished to rekindle the fires of Smithfield. Acquainted intimately with the bigotry of the Ulster Orangemen, so unlike anything in the whole British Empire, he has lauded their love of civil and religious liberty. Careless of consequences, he has inflamed the fanaticism of the Belfast workers against the helpless Catholics in their midst; he has revived the passions and hatreds of the seventeenth century, and aimed at creating an impassable gulf between North-East Ulster and the rest of Ireland. Consistent in his hatred of reform, he has been always with the capitalist and the landlord, ready to appeal for support to the factory girls and the mill hands of Belfast, but unwilling to improve even in the smallest the hard conditions under which they toil. This was the leader chosen to succeed Colonel Saunderson; a man with no popular sympathies, clever and intolerant, the advocate and the champion of ascendancy and privilege, with no generosity or even justice towards his political opponents, and not a particle of Irish wit or humour or kindliness of heart.

Between the Orangemen fighting for the Union and the Nationalists fighting for Home Rule, there was no room for Liberals, who would occupy an intermediate position, and after the General Election of 1906 only three Irish Liberals survived. The ablest of these, Mr. T. W. Russell, was a member of the Government, and as such identified with the Government's half-measure, the Councils Bill, though his own personal conviction would have carried him farther had he been free. The other two Liberals were men of no account, and had no influence on the political situation either in Ireland or Great Britain.

But politics and nationality are not synonymous terms. A man might be a patriotic Irishman though he did not belong to

any of the political parties in existence, and there were many such in Ireland in those years. The Gaelic League, for instance, was non-partisan, and yet its members were intensely Irish. Disdaining English habits and manners and the English outlook, they wanted Irish games, Irish songs, Irish books, Irish plays, and, as far as possible, Irish speech. They wanted Ireland to be Ireland and not an English shire, neither Yorkshire, nor Lancashire, nor even cockney London.

Non-political also was the Agricultural Organization Society, so closely identified with the name of Sir Horace Plunkett, who was its president. On its platforms the Orange and Nationalist farmers met, each anxious that agricultural conditions in Ireland might be greatly improved. By combination and co-operation they were getting better and cheaper seeds, better and cheaper manures, the best type of agricultural machinery, cheaper transit rates, new and better markets for their agricultural produce. And they might improve their breed of live-stock and get a higher price for their butter and eggs without changing their political convictions. It was ignorance which kept Protestant and Catholic Irishmen apart, which fed the fires of religious and political animosities. But when the Home Ruler and the Unionist came together to discuss purely business matters and promote their mutual interests, they learned to know each other better. There came a softening of ancient prejudices, a lessening of ancient hates. Sir Horace Plunkett and others like him did not cease to be Unionists, but their Unionism was a less forbidding kind than that of Belfast, and one of the reproaches that can be justly flung at Mr. Dillon was that he could see no good in agricultural co-operation and had never a kindly word for Sir Horace Plunkett. Such were the parties and men in Ireland in 1908.

Parliament was opened in the end of January, and in the King's Speech Bills were promised to improve and extend University education in Ireland and to amend the Irish Land Purchase Act of 1903. The first of these measures was long overdue, and was introduced by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Birrell, in March. Mr. Bryce would have preferred to set up Dublin University as a

great federal University, with Trinity College in Dublin, and the Cork and Belfast Queen's Colleges as constituent colleges. Such a solution of the University question would have many advantages, and one of the greatest would be to bring the youth of different classes and creeds together, even occasionally, as children of one common University, as friendly rivals in the examination room and on the athletic ground.

But Trinity College would have no such scheme, hugging its ancient privileges and refusing to share its prestige or its money with the masses of the people. It preferred to continue isolated, to be the educational centre of a class and a creed rather than be the educational centre of a nation. And its friends, the friends of reaction and ascendancy, were so strong in Parliament, especially in the House of Lords, that no Bill could pass in the teeth of its strong opposition.

Mr. Birrell avoided this danger by leaving Trinity College in its isolation. He abolished the Royal University, which was no more than an examining body; set up the Belfast Queen's College as the Queen's University, to serve the needs of the Presbyterians of Ulster; and established the National University, which was a federal University, with the new college in Dublin and the Queen's Colleges of Cork and Galway as constituent colleges. As to the financial provisions, Galway College was provided with an endowment of £12,000 a year, Cork College with £20,000 a year, and the new Dublin College with £32,000 a year. Belfast Queen's College got £28,000 a year, and the Queen's University, as distinct from the College, £10,000 a year, a like endowment being given to the National University as distinct from its constituent colleges. Buildings were to be provided for the New University and for the Queen's University at Belfast. There were to be no religious tests in either University, nor could any place of religious worship be erected, even by private endowment, within their walls. These provisions made them, in theory at least, even more godless than the old Queen's Colleges. But the administration was to be in accordance with popular wishes. For the Senate of the National University and the Governing Bodies of its colleges were in the

main Catholic and Nationalist; and those in Belfast in the main were Presbyterian.[1]

Any concession to the Catholics, no matter how small, was sure to rouse the ire of the meaner elements among the Ulster Tories, and such men as Mr. Moore, M.P. for Armagh, and Mr. Craig, M.P. for Antrim, opposed the Bill at every stage. The more enlightened of the Unionists, however, having safeguarded Trinity College, were willing that the Bill should pass, and men like Mr. Balfour and Mr. Wyndham gave no opposition. Nor did Sir Edward Carson; while among the Nationalists Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Healy accepted the Bill, not indeed because it was everything which the Irish Catholics were entitled to get, but because it was a workable scheme and might fairly satisfy their wants.[2]

The Bill passed its second reading by 344 votes to 31.[3] In committee provision was made for affiliation of colleges perfectly equipped for University work, and then the Bill passed its third reading by 207 to 19 votes.[4] Then it passed to the House of Lords, where it met with no serious opposition, and in the end of July it became law.

The Land Purchase Bill, the second Irish measure promised in the King's Speech, was not introduced until the autumn session in November, but it was met with serious opposition, so serious that its passage at that time of the year would be impossible, and it was dropped. The understanding was that the question would be dealt with in the next year.

Meantime there were debates on Home Rule, though no progress had been made. Before Parliament met, Mr. Birrell declared in a speech at Reading that he represented the goodwill and honest desire of the democracy of Great Britain to give fair play to Ireland.[5] And it was of good omen for that year that, about the same time, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy, who had been for some time separated from the Irish Party, came back to the fold; and when Parliament met in the end of January, there was

[1] Universities Act, and College Charters. [2] *Hansard*, April 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, May 12. [4] *Ibid.*, July 26. [5] *Times*, Jan. 12, 1908.

a reunited Irish Party in the House of Commons. But the King's Speech gave no evidence of goodwill towards Ireland except the promise of a University Bill and a Land Purchase Bill. There was not a word on Home Rule, not a word even on Irish administrative reform. Mr. Redmond could not do less than complain of the omission, though his censure was mild and ineffective.[1]

He made a bigger effort on the 30th of March, when he moved a resolution demanding Home Rule, denouncing in vigorous terms the extravagance, inefficiency, and unpopularity of the existing system of Irish government. Twenty years of resolute government had largely reduced the population, and engendered discontent which nothing would allay but the granting of Home Rule. Mr. Birrell was as usual sympathetic, and admitted that the Local Government Act had worked well. But there was no time to pass a measure of Home Rule in the existing Parliament. At the last election the Liberals had undertaken not to raise the question, and if it was to occupy a foremost place on the Liberal programme, the Irish should state their views and the security they offered for the protection of the Unionist minority. If this was the concrete form of Mr. Birrell's goodwill, it did not mean much.

There was worse from Mr. Asquith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who then led the House of Commons. The pledges of the Liberals in 1906 were given to combat tariff reform. He was in favour of Home Rule in purely local affairs, though he could not then go beyond the Councils Bill of the preceding year. He would not support Mr. Redmond's resolution unless it was altered so as to recognize more explicitly the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Redmond, always ready to yield, made the desired change, and the resolution passed; but even then Mr. Asquith would not undertake to bring in a Home Rule Bill, and thought that the English people required yet to be converted. No wonder that Mr. Healy expressed his bitter disappointment with such a speech.[2]

The prospect darkened in the next month, when Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman died and Mr. Asquith became Prime

[1] *Hansard*, Jan. 29, 30. [2] *Hansard*, March 30.

Minister. For Mr. Asquith had shown his half-heartedness and insincerity where Ireland was concerned; while the dead Premier was so honest and so much in earnest that he was willing to rise from his sick bed and support Mr. Redmond's resolution even at the risk of his life.[1]

Nor was this all. In the new Cabinet Mr. Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer, next therefore in importance to the Premier, and he had never shown any enthusiasm for Home Rule. Sir Henry Fowler, raised to the peerage, was also in the new Government, and so was Sir Edward Grey. Neither of these could be depended on as Home Rulers. As for Mr. Winston Churchill, also in the new Government, he was but a half-converted Tory, a man of no real political convictions, gyrating from one party to another, and intent only on advancing his own personal interests.

In Ireland disappointment deepened so much that Mr. Redmond was compelled to act as consoler. In a speech at Dublin he reminded the people that the Liberal Party had supported his Home Rule resolution; that the existing Parliament was pledged not to deal with the question, having been returned on tariff reform. He admitted, however, that the change from Campbell-Bannerman was bad, and he declared that the Irish electors at Manchester could not be asked to support the return of Mr. Churchill, who had vacated his seat on being appointed to the Cabinet.[2] His advice was taken, with the result that Mr. Churchill was defeated and had then to take refuge in Dundee.

Action of this kind would be far more effective with men like Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill than making excuses for their inactivity. But vigorous and determined action was seldom taken by Mr. Redmond, and in 1908 he had to be satisfied with the passing of the University Bill, the dropping of the Land Purchase Bill, and the indefinite postponement of Home Rule. He threatened indeed to force a dissolution as soon as possible; but the threat proved an empty one, and apparently was not taken seriously by the Liberal leaders, who in the presence of Mr. Redmond's strong language remained entirely unmoved.

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 73. [2] *Freeman's Journal*, April 16.

CHAPTER III

Supporting the Liberals

In a Dublin comic paper, *The Leprechaun*, published in the last weeks of 1908, there was a cartoon which accurately represented the position of the Irish leaders of the time. Outside the Liberal Hotel on a cold winter's night were Messrs. Redmond, Dillon, and Devlin, muffled up to the ears and playing as itinerant musicians to attract the attention of the guests inside, and perhaps get a few pence. Underneath were the words, " The waits still waiting "; while a little in the distance is Mr. William O'Brien, who mutters to himself: " They won't get much playing outside that door. They are all out of tune and it would take me to teach them harmony ".[1]

What the Irish leaders wanted from their Liberal friends was a new Land Purchase Bill. Mr. Dillon disliked Wyndham's Act of 1903. It had inflated the price of land, thus giving the landlords more than was their due, and it imposed an undue burden on the tenants. But the tenants did not always accept Mr. Dillon's advice not to buy. Buying even at a high price, with money advanced at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, brought them at once a substantial reduction in their yearly payments; it rid them of the landlords, whom they had no reason to like; and it gave them the sense and dignity of prospective ownership of the holdings. They were indeed so eager to buy that sales blocked the courts, land stock could not be put on the market in sufficient quantities to meet the demands, and there was a heavy loss on flotation, a loss as high as 10 per cent. This loss had to be made good out of the Development Fund coming to Ireland, and when this was exhausted, as

[1] *Leprechaun.*

it soon would be, the loss had to be made good by the ratepayers.

Lord Dunraven suggested [1] that the British Exchequer should advance £250,000 a year for a number of years, a sum which would be quite sufficient to leave the Development Fund untouched and save the ratepayers from an intolerable burden. Government Commissioners had repeatedly found that Ireland had been, and still was, heavily overtaxed, and a quarter of a million a year was but a small share of this overtaxation. In addition, much might be saved on the cost of the Irish police. The force was largely employed where there were land disputes, and its numbers might be considerably reduced when the land disputes had disappeared, as they always did where the tenants had purchased their lands.

Mr. William O'Brien agreed with Lord Dunraven, and thought that a conference of all Irish parties, making a joint and united demand for financial assistance to complete the land purchase, would be irresistible. But Mr. Dillon would have no conference. He wanted compulsory sale, a smaller price for the landlords, the breaking up of grasslands; he wanted land for the landless men who had been active, and were still active, in driving the graziers' cattle off the large untenanted farms. It was not easy to see how this programme could be carried out in the teeth of strong opposition in the House of Commons, and of a still more formidable opposition in the House of Lords. Indeed the House of Lords had already compelled the Government to drop their Land Purchase Bill of 1908; and the Liberals had not shown any anxiety to begin the fight with the Lords. But Mr. Dillon continued to distrust the Tories and to confide in the Liberals, and his colleagues Mr. Redmond and Mr. Devlin agreed with him, and in consequence they continued to play their musical instruments outside the Liberal Hotel, confident that a reward would come.

In preparation for the opening of Parliament in February a National Convention was summoned to Dublin, and assembled on the 10th of February, continuing its sessions for two days. It was held chiefly to examine and pronounce upon the Land Bill of 1908, which would be reintroduced in 1909, and it was hoped

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1908.

would be passed into law. This was as it should be. It was vital to the country that the work of land purchase should be continued, and the Government proposal to remove the obstacles to land purchase was one which concerned all the people, and as such called for examination at their hands. The Irish Party was a democratic party, dependent for its existence and efficiency on popular support. It was the duty of its members to explain the provisions of the Land Purchase Bill, to exhibit candidly its merits and its defects, and to do this without seeking to influence the people's judgment by appeals to passion, or consulting mere party interests. Free, open discussion was what was required. A machined convention, brought together to pass resolutions previously drafted by the Irish Party managers, and extolling the party and its works, would be worse than useless, and if the Convention were assembled in this fashion, and so directed and managed, it were better it had not assembled at all.

Yet this was the character of the Convention and this was the sort of work it was expected to do. From Belfast and its neighbourhood came an undue proportion of Hibernians, and they came not to discuss or even to hear discussion. They came armed with short heavy sticks, outwardly to keep order, but in reality to overawe those who desired to oppose Mr. Devlin or Mr. Dillon. No condemnation or even criticism of the Land Bill, or of the Irish Party leaders, was to be tolerated. Mr. Ginnell, M.P. for Westmeath, who had been identified with cattle-driving, and as such was unpopular with the Liberal Government, was shouted down and refused a hearing. Mr. William O'Brien recalled the words of Mr. George Wyndham in 1902. " No Government can settle the Irish Land question. It must be settled by the parties interested. The extent of useful action on the part of any Government is limited to providing facilities, in so far as that may be possible, for giving effect to any settlement arrived at by the parties." [1]

The Irish landlords were still strongly represented in the House of Commons, and in the House of Lords they were in

[1] O'Brien, *The Irish Party—who they are, and what they have done*, p. 13.

overwhelming strength, and Mr. O'Brien could see little chance of passing a Land Bill in the face of such powerful opposition. The outlook would be entirely different if landlord and tenant representatives were brought together, to remove, by mutual consent, the obstacles to the smooth and rapid working of Wyndham's Land Act of 1903. But such views as these got short shrift at the Convention. Mr. O'Brien was hooted and shouted down. In such an assembly free discussion and unfettered judgment were impossible, and the Convention voted confidence in the Irish Party, and endorsed in advance any action it might take on the Land Purchase Bill.

Mr. O'Brien then left the Convention, and soon after withdrew from Parliament and from public life. But his place in Cork City was taken by Mr. Maurice Healy, who shared Mr. O'Brien's views, and who was equally objectionable to the Irish Party managers.

Parliament was opened on the 17th of February, and the King's Speech promised that the Irish Land Purchase Bill of the previous year would be reintroduced. This was the only mention of Ireland. There was nothing about relieving her of admitted overtaxation, nothing about Home Rule, or even administrative reform, nothing about the development of her resources, nothing about providing better housing accommodation for the poor in her towns and cities. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, who seconded the Address, spoke words of sympathy, but he could speak only for himself, and did not presume to do more. "For my part, and speaking only for myself, I should like to say that I look forward to the day, which I hope is not far distant, when a thorough solution of the Irish problem may be sought in restoring to the Irish nation the right to manage their own affairs." Mr. Asquith, the Premier, was unwilling to go so far. On the contrary, he admitted, and with great alacrity, that there was lawlessness in parts of Ireland, and that it should be put down, as far as it could be reached, by the strong arm of the law.[1]

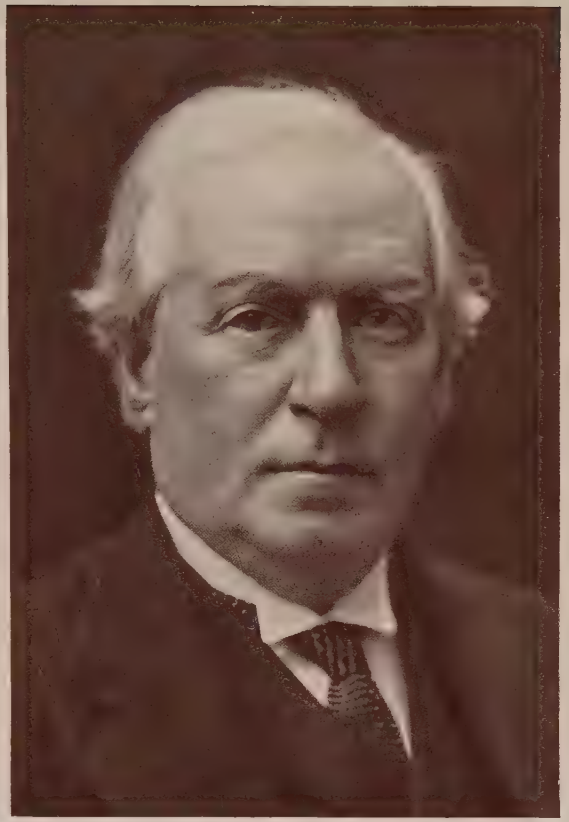
This supposed lawlessness favoured the subject of a special amendment to the Address which was moved by Earl Percy, an

[1] *Hansard.*

English Tory. For months before this date Sir Edward Carson and his Unionist colleagues from North-East Ulster, as well as Mr. Campbell, M.P. for Trinity College, had been going about England blackening the character of their own people. Specially active were a few Ulster Orange members, Messrs. Barrie, Lonsdale, Craig, and Moore. They were men of much less ability than Carson or Campbell, and altogether of a lower type. If an individual was unpopular, and boycotted as such; if cattle were driven off a farm; if fire-arms were discharged, even though little or no harm had been done, they brought all such cases before Parliament. They denounced the Liberal Government for having dropped the Peace Preservation Act in 1906, thus allowing a lawless people to carry arms. Day after day they plied the Chief Secretary with questions, asking for details of outrages and crime. They pelted mud plentifully, hoping that some at least would stick; and when they had, as they hoped, sufficiently influenced public opinion in Parliament and outside, they clamoured for the Crimes Act to be put in force.

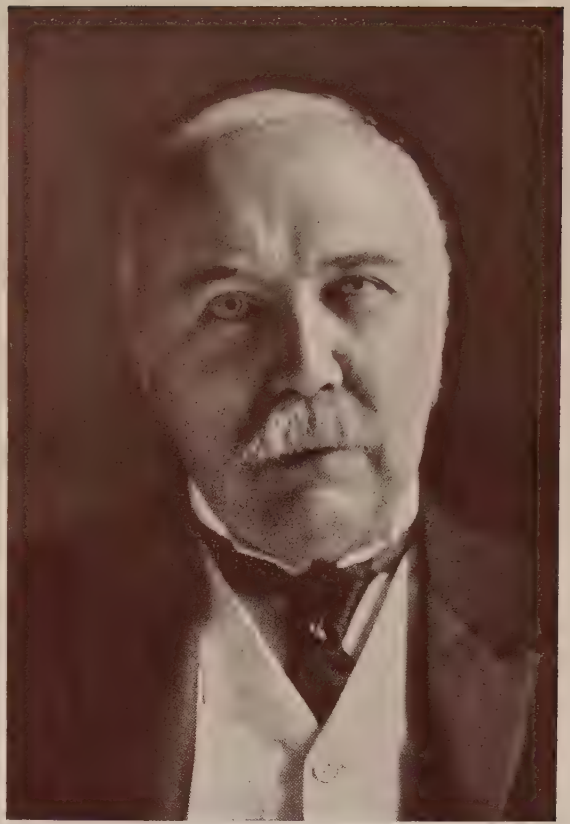
Earl Percy took up the cry, and, making use of the materials raked together by these Orangemen, he painted the condition of Ireland in lurid colours, seething with crime, dominated by lawless men, in the grip of an organization which respected neither liberty nor life. He denounced with great energy the Ministers of Government who refused " to restore the authority of the law, or to protect the elementary rights of His Majesty's subjects ". He marshalled his arguments and facts better than Messrs. Craig and Moore would have done, and he showed less rancour and passion; but he was not less reckless and extravagant in his statements, and quoted with glee an Irish judge's description of the state of affairs in the County of Galway as being " a saturnalia of crime ". Mr. Campbell filled in the picture with the artistic skill of the lawyer politician, and finished by describing the administration in Ireland under the Liberal Government as one " which for cowardice and inefficiency has no parallel in the history of the country ".[1]

[1] *Hansard.*



Russell

HERBERT H. ASQUITH



Ernest H. Mills

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

On English platforms Sir Edward Carson had been quite as violent and as reckless as Mr. Campbell. But in Parliament his bitterness was not shown, and his tone was moderate and even conciliatory. He protested solemnly that it was no pleasure to him to vilify the character of his own people; that he had no other object but to restore the authority of the law, so that in Ireland as elsewhere under the British Crown every law-abiding citizen should enjoy civil and religious liberty. He added that between Unionism and Home Rule there was no middle way; and he told the Liberals that they had neither the courage to coerce Ireland nor the courage to grant Home Rule.

From many members came answers to the accusations made. Mr. John Redmond willingly left to Mr. Birrell and the Irish Law Officers the task of dealing with special accusations, such as cattle-driving and intimidation and the prosecutions which followed. He rose not to defend the Government, but to defend Ireland, and he described the whole debate on the Unionist side as an attack, "a gross, unscrupulous, and an untruthful attack upon Ireland and upon the Irish people". Comparing the recent record of Ireland with that of England, he had no difficulty in showing that in proportion to the population England was far ahead of Ireland in outrage and crime. Murder and attempted murder, cruelty to children, offences against young girls, burglaries, larcenies, killing and maiming cattle—all these were far more common in England than in Ireland. Mr. Cherry, the Irish Attorney-General, was able to show that Scotland was far beyond Ireland in crime, and especially in undetected crime. Therefore it was a foul slander to say that Ireland was pre-eminent in crime.[1]

Mr. Birrell was able to show, from the official reports of the Irish police, that the amount of crime and outrage in Ireland had been greatly exaggerated. There was boycotting and intimidation and cattle-driving, but such cases were not very common, nor over such an extensive area as Unionist orators and writers would have the public believe. And these violations of the law came

[1] *Hansard.*

not from any innate depravity, not from the love of crime as such, but because the people were hungry for land, and the lesson had been taught the Irish people by successive English Governments, that without turbulence and violation of law there will be no concession and no reform. Parliament will not even listen until the law is broken and the Government defied.[1]

The last speech in the debate was made by Mr. Asquith. He responded quite readily to the demands of the Orangemen by promising them that the law would be enforced rigorously against evil-doers. On the other hand, he pleased his Nationalist friends by saying that the land could never be taught obedience and respect for law until by legislation, as well as by administration, the people were associated with the law which they were expected to obey. With this expression of friendliness, and with the defeat of Earl Percy's amendment, Mr. Redmond and his party were satisfied.

The Land Bill was introduced in the next month, passed its second reading by a large majority, went through Committee in July, and, having got its third reading in September, was sent to the House of Lords.

Up to the passing of Wyndham's Act of 1903, 2,500,000 acres had been sold, and £24,000,000 had been advanced by the British Treasury. On the 1st of March, 1909, an additional 7,000,000 acres had been sold, or agreed to be sold. Of the purchase price of these 7,000,000 acres only £28,000,000 had been advanced, leaving £56,000,000 still to be advanced. This made up more than £100,000,000, and Mr. Wyndham calculated that this sum would be sufficient to purchase all the land of Ireland unsold in 1903. It was an incorrect estimate, for there were still 9,000,000 acres unsold, and the estimate now was that the purchase price of all the land unsold in 1903 would reach £180,000,000.

Under Wyndham's Act the bonus to the landlord was 12 per cent. But it was provided that the bonus would be revised after five years, and this was done in November, 1908, when the bonus was cut down to 3 per cent. This figure could not be altered

[1] *Hansard.*

without fresh legislation. The bonus was a free gift, not repayable to the Treasury, and its reduction was a serious discouragement to landlords whom the higher bonus might easily induce to sell.

Such an investment as land stock, which was Government stock bearing $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent interest, ought to have been popular. But in reality it was not, and always stood at a discount. The loss on flotation had to be made good by the Irish Development Fund, which was all but exhausted in 1909, and the further loss would fall on the Irish rate-payers. This made land purchase become unpopular with the tenants on whom the burden of higher rates would fall.

In Mr. Birrell's Bill of 1909 the bonus would be variable, in inverse proportion to the price, so that the higher the price of the land the less would be the bonus for the landlord. Nor would this bonus be any longer a free gift for the landlord, but would be met by raising the interest from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Treasury, however, made a merit of its liberality by assuming a burden of £30,000,000, which was the limit to provide the bonus under the Wyndham Act. The £30,000,000 would relieve both the Development Fund and the rate-payers. It was also proposed that both the Estates Commission and the Congested Districts Board should be invested with compulsory powers to acquire land; and the Congested Districts Board should be allowed to sell land thus purchased to anybody, after the wants of the tenants on the estate had been satisfied. This was meant to provide land for the landless men, such as the sons of tenants. Further, the limit on congested estates was raised to £10, so that when the average value of the holdings did not go beyond this figure it would be a congested estate. Lastly, the number of members of the Congested Districts Board would be increased by the addition of members elected by the County Councils of the congested areas.

On the second reading of the Bill Mr. Campbell objected to this elective element as probably leading to corruption and jobbery, and he objected to compulsory sale. Sir Edward Carson and his friends also opposed the Bill. Mr. T. M. Healy supported it, but pleaded that there should be agreement, and if the Bill were

presented as an agreed measure there would be no doubt as to its passing into law. Mr. Redmond liked the provision removing a contingent burden on the rate-payers, and he liked the introduction of an elective element on the Congested Districts Board; but he disliked raising the rate of interest from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He supported the Bill; and with the Liberals and Nationalists acting together the Unionists were outnumbered and defeated, and the second reading was carried by a majority of more than two to one.

In Committee Mr. Redmond proposed that the annuity should be $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, and as he was supported both by the Irish Tories and by Mr. Wyndham, the Government had only a majority of 35. His further amendment to have Consols substituted for land stock was also supported by Sir Edward Carson and his party, and this time the Government narrowly escaped defeat. But the Unionist amendment to retain the 12 per cent bonus was defeated. Mr. Dillon was specially vehement, complaining that the landlords were getting too much, that the Wyndham Act had raised the purchase price of land from 17 to $22\frac{1}{2}$ years purchase. In September the third reading was taken. Sir Edward Carson moved the rejection of the Bill, but was defeated by a majority of more than three to one.[1]

His friends were more powerful in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons, and though the Lords gave the Bill a second reading they fell upon it in Committee. Lord Milner, who, though of English parentage, was born in Germany, and had much of the insolence of the Prussian *Junker*, wished to reject the Bill on the second reading, and, having failed to do this, wanted to so change it in Committee that it would be useless. Lords Atkinson, Londonderry, and Lansdowne, all Irish peers, joined eagerly in the work of mutilation, and when the Bill returned to the House of Commons it was so changed that it could scarcely be recognized.

The compulsory powers to acquire land were given only to the Congested Districts Board. The limit for congestion was

[1] *Hansard.*

reduced from £10 to £7, so that an estate could not be said to be congested if the average rating of the holdings was beyond £7. The provision allowing the Congested Board to provide land for the landless men was also struck out, the reason assigned being that to give land to such men, who had been so much concerned in cattle-driving, would be to put a premium on lawlessness. Finally, the elective element on the Congested Board was not to be allowed, though an amendment was inserted raising the number of nominated members from seven to nine. The Government objected to these amendments, and the Irish Nationalists were indignant. But the Lords would not yield, and with these drastic changes, which largely nullified the intentions of its authors, the Bill became law.

Nor was this the only disappointment for Ireland in 1909. Mr. Stead records that on the appointment of Mr. Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer he had a talk with him on his new office. The Chancellor was apparently well pleased with it, and especially with the prospect it afforded him of effecting social reforms. The veto of the House of Lords was certain to be imposed on all Liberal legislation, when it could be done; but at the Exchequer the Lords were powerless, and Mr. George was determined that the financial prerogatives of the House of Commons should be used to cover many schemes which the Lords would unsparingly reject if they were free to do so.[1] This was what the Chancellor did in his Budget of 1909, which he introduced on the 21st of April.

It was essentially a poor man's Budget. A deficit of £16,000,000 had to be made good to pay for old age pensions; but Mr. George would not have the additional taxes put upon the poor man. There were many ways in which the money of the nation could be effectively used to fight squalor and poverty; but the extra taxation to meet the extra outlay must not be put on the poor. The burden must be put on the shoulders that were broad and strong. Therefore his Budget was described as a poor man's Budget, a Budget, he said himself, which waged

[1] *Review of Reviews*, May, 1909.

implacable warfare against poverty. And when its provisions had been thrown into legislative form and carried into effect, Mr. Lloyd George hoped to see before his own generation had passed away " a great advance towards the good time when poverty, with the wretchedness and squalor and human degradation which always follow in its camp, will be as remote from the people of this country as the wolves which once infested our forests ".

Mr. Lloyd George did not think that it was any part of the duty of a Government to create employment, but he did think it an essential part of its business to see that the people were equipped to make the best of their own country, and if necessary were helped to make the best of their own country. " The State can help by instruction, by experiment, by organization, by direction, and even in certain cases which are outside the legitimate sphere of individual enterprise by incurring direct responsibility." And he added that the United Kingdom, of all great industrial countries, spent the least on work connected with the development of its resources.[1]

As the Budget was a poor man's one, the Chancellor would not tax the necessaries of life such as tea and sugar, though he did put a tax on tobacco, which is consumed by the poor as well as the rich. For the benefit of the poor also he would set up labour exchanges to facilitate employment; he would also have insurance against sickness and unemployment; he would safeguard old age pensions, and he would remove the stigma of pauperism from 250,000 persons, who were past seventy years and had the miserable allowance of half a crown per week, by raising them to the dignity of old age pensioners, with double their present weekly allowance. It would also be in the interests of the poor that the surplus he expected to raise would be chiefly spent. For if land was reclaimed, if agriculture was encouraged, if transport facilities were increased, if fisheries were developed, if inland navigation was improved, if roads were put in better condition, labour would be more plentiful and be more remunera-

[1] *Hansard.*

tive, while benefits would be conferred not only on the poor but on the whole community.

A glance at the new taxes showed how the burdens were being put on the shoulders of the rich. Under the head of Customs the old taxes brought in £28,000,000; the new taxes were estimated to bring up the amount to nearly £81,000,000, the commodities taxed being petrol, imported spirits, and tobacco. The Excise duties had brought in £32,000,000, and now there were new taxes calculated to bring in an additional £3,000,000. These taxed commodities were spirits, liquor licences, and motor-car licences, all of which had contributed heretofore to the revenue, but would now contribute an increased amount. There was a large addition to the death duties and to the income tax, and under the head of land taxes there would be an increment duty, a leasehold reversion duty, an undeveloped land duty, and increased stamp duties.

No great objection could be raised to the higher tax on imported spirits, and the tobacco duty was not heavy, and would be shared alike by rich and poor. Nor could much fault be found with the increased spirit licences, which would be graduated according to population. For if the State created a monopoly, giving its profits to a select number of individuals, it could also vary the conditions under which this monopoly could be held. Objection might, however, be raised to the petrol and motor-car tax as impeding industry; but the tax would be devoted to the improvement of roads, and in consequence the objection disappeared. The very poor were protected against the increased income tax, because no income tax would be paid on incomes of less than £160; but those with incomes of twice this amount had reason to complain. These were the poorer middle class, whose efforts to live decently on a small income had always been great.

To put 15 per cent duty on a dead man's estate was a heavy tax. But this was done only on estates of a million, and the heir-at-law would still have a sufficiency to live on, and need not excite special sympathy. Nor was it inequitable that a landlord should be taxed 20 per cent on the increased value of his land, not due to

his own energy or industry or capital, but to the growth of the community round his land. It was also reasonable that landlord property should be taxed when a lease expired and a new and higher rent was imposed.

Under this head Mr. Lloyd George was eloquent, and he was just. He instanced the case of the quarrymen at Festiniog, who built on rocks on which even a goat could not live, and on swamps not worth more than two shillings an acre, and yet who had to pay for these rocks and swamps up to £50 an acre for building sites. And he told how land had increased in value near Limehouse. It was land between the sea and Thames, up to a certain date a sodden marsh. Then the commerce of London increased. Many ships bearing their burdens from afar came up from the great ocean, attracting labour from many ports. Then the land rose in value for housing accommodation; the opportunity of the landlords came, and land increased in value from £2 or £3 an acre to £6000 and even £8000 an acre.

He asked: "Who made that golden swamp? Was it the landlord? his energy, his brains?—a poor look-out for the place if it were. It was solely the continued efforts of all the people engaged in the trade and commerce of the port of London, the trader, merchant, shipowner, dock-labourer, workman, everyone except the landlord. We are placing burdens on the broadest shoulders. Why should I put burdens on the people? I am one of the children of the people. I was brought up amongst them. I know their trials; and God forbid that I should add one grain of trouble to the anxieties which they bear with such patience and fortitude. When the Prime Minister did me the honour to put me in charge of the National Exchequer at a time of great difficulty, I made up my mind, in framing the Budget which was in front of me, that at any rate no cupboard should be barer, no lot would be harder. By that test I challenge them to judge the Budget." [1]

To brighten the lot, to lighten the oppressive burdens of the poor was certainly no ignoble ambition, and if the Budget was one

[1] *Hansard.*

for Great Britain alone, it would merit the description of Mr. Dillon that it was a great and good Budget. But it was for Ireland as well as Great Britain, and it added to the taxation of a country grievously overtaxed. Raising the tax on spirits by 3*s.* 9*d.* a gallon was a serious hindrance to distilling, which was an Irish industry. The stamp duties also bore heavily on Ireland, and seriously hampered the transfer of land. And it was unfair and unjust to put an additional burden of two millions on Ireland, already taxed beyond its taxable capacity, and which for generations had been contributing to the British Exchequer three millions a year more than its due. It is true that Mr. Redmond spoke against the Budget and his party voted against the second reading of the Finance Bill; and he endeavoured to have it amended in Committee. But he took care not to vote against it on the third reading, though it was unamended in favour of Ireland, and the whisky duty and the stamp duties remained.

Mr. T. M. Healy had no taste for sham battles. From the Irish point of view he thought the Budget thoroughly bad, and if not rejected it ought to be seriously amended; and he and a few members of the Irish Party endeavoured to have changes made. They began on the Budget resolutions and before the resolutions had taken shape in the Financial Bill. Against the additional stamp duty on transfer and sale of property Mr. Kennedy, who was a lawyer, made a strong case, and moved an amendment exempting sales on transfers of lands purchased under any of the Irish Land Purchase Acts. He did not object to a double stamp duty on the sale of a holding held under a judicial lease. Such a holding sold at £200 would now pay £1 per cent instead of 10*s.* But a tenant who had purchased under the Land Purchase Act, and then sold, would pay not only £1 per cent on the purchase money, but also £1 per cent on the whole redemption value of the farm. If he sold for £500 and the redemption value was £1500, he would have to pay on the whole £2000 a stamp duty of £20. This was a serious matter for Ireland, where land was rapidly changing hands. And it differentiated unfairly between Ireland and England, because in England the land was not changing

hands as in Ireland. Mr. Maurice Healy, another lawyer, strengthened the case made by Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Kettle was equally emphatic. They had the hearty support of Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Moore. So that on this question Ireland spoke with one voice. It might have been thought that Mr. Redmond would have added the weight of his position and arguments. But he left the speaking to Mr. Dillon, always friendly to Liberal measures and to Liberal Ministers. He did not for a moment suppose that English Chancellors of the Exchequer wished to inflict special injustice on Ireland, least of all "the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had always been, throughout his whole career, a warm friend of Ireland".[1] Experience had taught nothing to Mr. Dillon. He was ready to profess faith in Lord Rosebery in 1894, and he was equally ready to profess faith in Mr. Lloyd George in 1909. As might be expected from Mr. Dillon's speech, the opposition of the Irish Party was a mere pretence, and of more than eighty Nationalist members scarcely fifty voted in the division.[2]

On the motion to impose an additional duty on whisky, raising the duty from 11*s.* to 14*s.* 9*d.*, there was another battle. But again the generals would not lead and the soldiers were reluctant to advance. Mr. T. M. Healy, however, was in earnest. He protested against the Budget, not so much because it added a little to the price of the poor man's glass of whisky and hampered almost fatally an Irish industry, as because it added taxation where there was overtaxation already. And it differentiated unfairly between Ireland and England. Under the Budget the Irishman who paid 4½*d.* for a glass of whisky paid fourpence to the Government and a halfpenny to the manufacturer. The Englishman who paid 4½*d.* for beer paid just one halfpenny to the Government and fourpence to the manufacturer. Thus was English beer lightly taxed and Irish whisky taxed almost to death. The effect would be disastrous to Irish distillers and to the cultivation of barley.

Mr. Healy taunted the Liberal Government with always

[1] *Hansard.* [2] *Hansard.*

betraying Ireland when taxation was being imposed, and with never keeping their promises to their Irish friends in Parliament. And he prophesied accurately when he declared that "When the Government goes out of office we shall not have had Home Rule and we shall have had two millions of extra taxation".[1] Mr. Redmond's party, however, offered no serious resistance to the proposal. Like Mr. Healy, Mr. William Redmond protested strongly against any additional taxation, and he was obviously sincere. Mr. Gwynn foresaw that unduly taxing whisky would lead to illicit distillation, with all its attendant evils. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, though he made a long speech, was manifestly not anxious for war. Nor did Mr. Dillon or Mr. Redmond speak one word by way of protest; they did not even vote. Finally, though Sir Edward Carson and his party opposed the tax by their votes, only twenty-four Nationalists, even including Mr. Healy and his friends, went into the Opposition lobby. The Liberal Government must not be embarrassed, though Ireland was robbed and betrayed.[2]

The proposed increased taxation of 8*d.* in the £1 on home-grown tobacco was opposed by Mr. William Redmond. Tobacco had recently been cultivated in Limerick, Wexford, and Meath, and with success, and an additional duty would have the effect of discouraging, perhaps even of killing, an industry in its infancy. It would throw men out of employment and encourage emigration. But again Mr. Redmond got only the support of the smaller men in the party, such as Mr. John O'Connor and Mr. Clancy. Mr. T. M. Healy again intervened with a bitter speech, a scathing indictment of the Government in its treatment of Ireland. From the Irish leader, however, there was no speech and no support. Only twenty-two Nationalists voted against the Government, and Mr. John Redmond and Messrs. Dillon and T. P. O'Connor were among those who did not vote.[3]

Day after day in Parliament it was the same tale. The Irish leaders condemned the new taxes imposed on Ireland and so got applause on Irish platforms. But their condemnation was not

[1] *Hansard.* [2] *Hansard.* [3] *Hansard.*

translated into active and earnest opposition. They were frequently absent from divisions. The rank and file did not think it worth while even to attend Parliament, still less to vote or speak against the Government. The Irish leaders loudly and vehemently protested that they were entirely independent of English parties. But in reality they were part of the Liberal majority; their followers were little better than English Liberals masquerading as Irish Nationalists, and the leaders themselves were in the closest touch with Mr. Lloyd George, and had no small share of patronage in Ireland.

But they were losing touch with the Irish people, and the additional taxation of the country and the persistent denial of Home Rule excited resentment in Ireland. The Budget, especially the extra tax on whisky, was universally condemned. The farmer who had purchased his holding hated the new stamp duties. For he might wish to dispose of his interest, and it would be a serious hindrance to such transfer that he should be compelled to pay a twofold stamp duty, and at a higher rate. The increment tax on land was condemned, because it was not sufficiently clear that agricultural land would not be included. The duty on home-grown tobacco did not affect many, because the industry was only in its infancy. But such an industry still struggling against initial difficulties, and only partially developed, could ill bear additional taxation; and if the tobacco-fields of Limerick, Wexford, and Meath disappeared, unemployment and emigration would follow. The increased cost of liquor licences bore heavily on many shopkeepers whose business was struggling and poor, and with whom the race between receipts and expenditure was always close. And although it might be for the public good to see many small public-houses close their doors, the closing of them would bring ruin on many families and would widen the area of discontent.

The increased tax on whisky was the worst tax of all. The distilleries run on a small margin of profit might perhaps have to shut down, and this meant unemployment and driving capital abroad to help in the development of foreign industries. The

closing of these distilleries meant also less barley-growing and less return from hundreds of acres of land which had hitherto provided healthful employment to many. The Irish workman, with less wages and more precarious employment than his English brother, complained that the Englishman got his beer cheap because it was lightly taxed, while in Ireland the poor man's glass of whisky was dear because whisky was so heavily taxed. No doubt he could, like the Englishman, drink beer; but this would be to compel him to drink what he did not like to drink, and it would be to encourage English brewing and ruin Irish distilling. Finally, the publican had a serious grievance. Necessity compelled him to pass on the added tax to the consumer. But a higher price for whisky would certainly reduce the consumption, and to raise the price tended to make him unpopular with his customers, the last thing a publican desired.

These coalescing elements of discontent found expression in many ways, at the fair and market, at the public meeting, in letters and leading articles in the newspapers. And there was a monster meeting in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, where strong language was used against this fresh attempt to plunder Ireland, as if she had not been sufficiently robbed already by the British Exchequer. The Dublin Corporation was vigorous in its denunciation, and a strongly worded resolution was passed against the Budget. The Lord Mayor was ordered to bring this resolution to London and to present it at the Bar of the House of Commons. And this was done.

An Irish Party amenable to public opinion and responsive to the people's wishes would have been the ready mouthpiece of popular discontent, and would have made their influence felt in Parliament. But the Irish Party was controlled by four men who would allow neither individuals within the party itself nor their constituents in Ireland to have any real voice in public affairs. To praise these four leaders was patriotism, to blame or even to criticize them was faction; it was against unity and majority rule. A district councillor who hated the Budget, and had the courage to say so at a council meeting, was set upon by some satellite of the

party leaders, someone, perhaps, whom they had put on the bench. A public letter complaining of the overtaxation of Ireland and calling on the Irish Party to resist further imposts was attacked as that of a crank by the *Freeman's Journal*, or by some of its imitators in the provinces. The member of Parliament who grossly neglected his duty by constant absence from the House of Commons was indemnified against all neglect if he occasionally made a speech lauding the statesmanship of Mr. Redmond or Mr. Dillon, or organized a public reception in their honour. But the member who imitated Mr. William O'Brien's independence got Mr. O'Brien's treatment. Everything was machined, press, platform, the local boards, and, above all, the convention held for the selection of members of Parliament.

When Mr. T. M. Healy or his brother sought to have the Budget amended, they received no support from the party. Mr. John Redmond was willing to assent to any taxation, provided his action improved the prospect of Home Rule. Mr. Dillon went much farther, and was always ready to praise Mr. Lloyd George. Nor had he any hesitation in stating in his place in Parliament that, " if we take the financial record of this Government since they took office in 1906, they have treated Ireland more generously than any Government since the Act of Union ".[1] Mr. Dillon was then the most powerful man in the Irish Party, and if this was his considered judgment, it was little wonder that Mr. Lloyd George imposed overtaxation on Ireland with a light heart.

With the national organization completely in their hands, the *Freeman's Journal*, the party organ, ready to explain and defend all their acts, and the rank and file of the Irish Party sufficiently submissive, Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon must have felt sure of their ground as the year 1909 drew to its close. But two events occurred during the year which were calculated to disturb their repose. Mr. William O'Brien had effaced himself after the National Convention in February. At the end of the year he returned to Parliament as member for Cork, an implacable foe of the Budget and of the general policy of the Irish Party. And

[1] *Hansard*, April 19, 1910.

Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy, acting together, were a formidable combination. The second disturbing event occurred in June, when a motion was made at the Dublin Corporation condemning Parliamentary action altogether as absolutely futile. Alderman Kelly, the mover, was a Sinn Feiner and a capable man, and was able to make a good case, and though his motion was defeated it received substantial support. The unpopularity of the Budget and the continued denial of Home Rule strengthened the hands of his party, and if the Irish Party could do no better than they had been doing, it was only a matter of time until Ireland would repudiate them and take the Sinn Feiner to her arms.[1]

In the March number of the *North American Review* the well-known writer Mr. Sydney Brooks summed up the position in Ireland accurately and with an outsider's impartiality. "There is", he said, "something singularly precarious in the whole position of the Irish Party just now. It is a party not only without a Parnell, but without the nationalist movement that Parnell evoked. The last fifteen years have witnessed a steady decline in the personal and representative character of the Irish M.P.'s. Men have been foisted upon the party who in their heart of hearts do not care twopence about Home Rule. . . . The more vigorous and stalwart Nationalists in Ireland resent the degree to which the party has fallen. . . . Nevertheless the Irish Party are in no serious danger of being ousted."

Such a party could yet be reformed, but if so the country must take the matter in hands, for the Irish Party of 1909 would never be reformed from within.

[1] *Freeman's Journal.*

CHAPTER IV

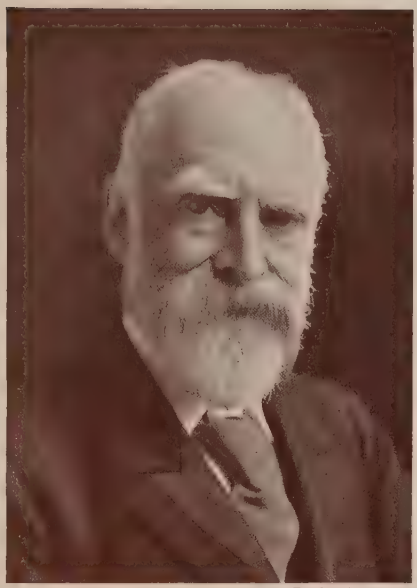
Slow Progress

It would be difficult to get a Parliament with less sense of justice and fair play than the Irish Parliament in the last years of its existence. But those who expected that Ireland would fare better at the hands of the assembly at Westminster soon discovered that Irish popular opinion was little respected on the English side of the Irish Sea. The treachery of Pitt on the Catholic Question was followed and copied on other Irish questions, and not until 1829 were the Catholics emancipated, and then only as an alternative to civil war. A reformed Parliament and a Liberal Government made little difference; and when concessions were granted it was due more to party interests or political expediency than to any innate sense of justice. If the Liberals were in office and dependent in the House of Commons for their majority on the Irish vote, they promised concessions, and often forgot to have these promises fulfilled. Even the Conservatives would accept the Irish vote in order to retain office, and were ready to grant something in return; and it was the Tories, not the Liberals, who passed the Ashbourne Act, the Local Government Act, and the Wyndham Land Purchase Act.

In the House of Commons there were usually a few fair-minded Englishmen who had a good word to say for Ireland and were ready to give a vote for Irish freedom. But in the House of Lords Ireland had no friend. In that assembly reaction sat enthroned. Mr. Chamberlain's description of Dublin Castle fitted it well. It was " an anachronism in the nineteenth century ". It opposed emancipation; it opposed land reform and the disestablishment of the Church; it rejected the Home Rule Bill of

Ernest H. Mills

LORD WOLVERHAMPTON



Reginald Haines

LORD BRYCE

Russell

VISCOUNT GREY

1893. Mr. Gladstone, justly indignant, would, old as he was, have challenged it to mortal combat. But his principal lieutenants did not share his enthusiasm for Liberal principles; and his successor, Lord Rosebery, a peer himself, was a poor specimen of a Liberal leader, and had no desire to seriously curtail the privileges of the assembly to which he belonged. In the following years the Lords were left undisturbed, for their friends, the Tories, were in office. But after the General Election of 1906 the Liberals were in office, with an enormous majority; and a House of Commons overwhelmingly Liberal, with a mandate from the people to pass Liberal measures, was in no humour to submit to a reactionary and unrepresentative assembly blocking the path of reform.

The trouble between the Lords and Commons began with Mr. Birrell's Education Bill of 1906. By the Act of 1902 all elementary schools were placed under the County Council, and elective school boards were abolished. The distinction between Board Schools and Voluntary Schools, however, still remained. In the Board Schools there were to be no religious tests for teachers, and for the children no religious teaching distinctive of any special religious creed. There could be nothing more than a teaching of those truths, such as the Unity of God, which were common to the creeds of all Christian Churches. Hitherto only the Board Schools received State aid and aid from the local rates; but now to the Voluntary Schools, where denominational religious teaching was given, and where the teachers were appointed by the managers and subject to religious tests, the grants were to be given as in the Board Schools. There was to be a council of management of six members, of whom two were appointed by the County Council, and the others by the religious authority in charge of the school.

The Liberals, largely recruited from the ranks of the Nonconformists, objected that all should be as the Board Schools. Giving aid to schools where religious teaching was given was, they said, a State endowment of religion. They objected to having only two of the boards of management appointed by the

County Council as taxation without representation. And they objected that large numbers of teachers, otherwise highly qualified, would be shut out of employment because they did not conform to the religion of the Voluntary School managers. Their demand was to have a small amount of Bible teaching, enough to satisfy themselves, but not enough to satisfy either Anglicans or Catholics. Except for this small amount of Bible teaching in the schools, the proposed system of the Bill of 1906 would be a purely secular system. It put all the primary schools under a local public authority which appointed and dismissed teachers, drew up the programmes, and selected the books to be used. There would then be no religious tests for teachers, no payment for religious teaching of any Church.

The objections to these drastic changes were obvious, and were urged with great earnestness from the Irish and Tory benches. Some concessions were made, and the special claims of the Jews and the Catholics were recognized. But these concessions were considered inadequate, and the Bill was so changed in the House of Lords that it was no longer a Liberal measure. In the same year the Lords had also destroyed the Plural Voting Bill; and the Liberals, enraged at such conduct, vowed that the vote of the Lords should disappear, and that the will of the people should prevail.[1]

Strong language was used against the House of Lords, fierce denunciations hurled against an unrepresentative assembly which thus dared to thwart the people's will. It was insolent and reactionary; it was partisan; it was useless as a revising chamber; it was nothing more than a branch of the Tory Party, ready to pass any measure at the bidding of the Tory leader. On the other hand, a Liberal Government, fresh from the constituencies, and with an overwhelming majority in the popular chamber, was powerless to legislate, and could do so only by permission of the Tory leader himself, who had been defeated at the polls. These peers would have only Conservative measures, and never troubled to attend Parliament except when some Tory measure

[1] *Hansard.*

was to be advanced or some Liberal measure to be opposed. In general, they neglected their duties as legislators, and in a House of nearly 600 members over 400 attended less than ten sittings during the year. Yearly 200 failed to attend a single session of the House to which they belonged. "The House of Lords", said one M.P., "is a House of Laziness; it is unbusinesslike; it displays no critical ability; it is a lethal chamber; the level of discussion is much below that of a workman's debating society. They represent nobody, but take precious good care to look after certain interests." [1]

This gentleman would deal drastically with the House of Lords. He thought it was really a dead House and only required burying, and the Liberal Government ought to act as undertaker; and he protested that, for his part, he would not be among the mourners. Others would have a referendum from the House of Lords, though this solution was not widely accepted. Mr. Lloyd George declared that the matter must be fought out, that privilege must be eliminated from the constitution; but he added that it must be a real fight, not a sham battle, and that unless the Liberal Party meant to fight to a finish it was worse than a farce to raise the question at all.[2] Suggestions were made in plenty to abolish the hereditary principle, to create life peers, to extend the Royal prerogative so that only a limited number of peers summoned by the Crown could sit in Parliament, to limit the Lords' veto to a single session. Or again, as the Lords could not alter money Bills, Liberal measures might be joined with the Budget, and then, being sent up to the Lords, could only be accepted or rejected. In the latter case supplies would be stopped, the whole machinery of government would be brought to a standstill, and if an appeal were then made to the people, it was calculated that the House of Lords would be submerged in a tide of popular rage.

The Liberal Ministers were not, however, in a hurry to put the issue to the proof, and talked so much without action following that Lord Rosebery likened them to Mr. Snodgrass, who

[1] *Review of Reviews*, Jan. 1907. [2] Speech at Newcastle, Jan. 23, 1907.

announced that he was going to begin fighting.[1] But the fight was not indefinitely postponed, and in June, 1907, the Prime Minister moved and had carried by 434 to 149 votes the following resolutions: " That in order to give effect to the will of the people, as expressed by their elected representatives, it is necessary that the power of the other House to alter or reject Bills passed by this House should be so restricted by law as to secure that within the limits of a single Parliament the final decision of the Commons should prevail ".[2] This resolution would be given effect to in a Bill which the Premier promised would be shortly introduced, and which would provide that Bills altered in the Lords would be a second time sent to the House of Lords, and a third time, if disagreement continued. Meantime there would be a series of conferences, time would be wasted, and only after the third time would the Bill become law in spite of the House of Lords. The Tory leader, Mr. Balfour, was not seriously alarmed, and the Lords continued in their course. They altered both the Small Holdings Bill and the Irish Evicted Tenants Bill out of all recognition. They would probably have rejected the Irish University Bill of 1908 if Mr. Balfour had not supported it. The Education Bill of 1908 had to be abandoned in the House of Commons because it was certain of rejection in the House of Lords. And the House of Lords treated the Licensing Bill with such contempt that they rejected it on its second reading.

In the debates on these measures the Irish Party usually voted with the Liberals, and both Ireland as well as Great Britain benefited by the Old Age Pension Act, an Act inspired by Christian charity, and which brought solace to many of God's poor in their last years. The Irish Party could also congratulate themselves on the passing of the Universities Act, though it fell far short of what the Irish Catholics might have reasonably expected. It left Trinity College with all its wealth and privileges untouched, still to be the preserve of the Protestants, whose numbers compared to the Catholics were so much smaller, and whose wealth was so much greater. It left Cork College with an insufficient endow-

[1] *Annual Register*, 1907, pp. 116–7. [2] *Hansard*, June 26, 1907.

ment, and the College in Galway scandalously poor. And it went even farther than the old Queen's Colleges in putting a ban on religion. For it not only prohibited any church from being erected within the College by the College funds, but it prohibited any such being set up even by private endowment. It did not, however, prevent Catholics being professors or lecturers, or members of the Governing Body, and in fact many Catholics were appointed to these positions.

The Irish Party would have gladly welcomed a Government attack on the House of Lords, the ancient and bitter enemy of Irish freedom. But with the passing of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman the prospect of any such serious and determined attack receded. Mr. Asquith was too cold and passionless, too much lacking in enthusiasm for any cause, to rouse popular passion. He preferred hesitation and wavering and compromise, and had no desire to imperil his position as Premier. He talked well, but talk was not followed up by action. In a great issue involving a radical constitutional change such a leader was ill-suited to fire the masses, and indeed before the end of 1908 the anger of the masses against the House of Lords began to cool.

A cartoon in *Punch* accurately represented the position at that date—Lord Lansdowne, the Tory leader in the House of Lords, in the act of destroying more Liberal Bills. Mr. Asquith, the Liberal Premier, is standing by with folded arms and with an expression of great indignation on his countenance. Sitting near him is John Bull, sound asleep. Mr. Asquith, apparently very angry, says to Lord Lansdowne: "Insult me six times more and I won't be answerable for myself. And heaven knows what would happen if I appealed to my friend here, who already has great difficulty in controlling his indignation." The facts were that the House of Lords continued to throw out or mutilate Liberal measures, and in 1908 had rejected the Licensing Bill and the Education Bill. Yet there was no serious attempt made to curb its powers of destruction. More than eighteen months had passed since the late Prime Minister's resolution about the House of Lords had been passed, but nothing had been done to throw

these resolutions into legislative form. Mr. Asquith now waited for further rejection of Liberal measures, and was willing to submit to further humiliation at the hands of the Lords. At some time in the future, not specified, he would consider what could be done. But meantime the English people, represented by John Bull in the cartoon, were sound asleep.

A leader enthusiastic about reforms would have roused the people to action; but Mr. Asquith was not going even to make the attempt; and *Punch* could rightly describe the state of things as one in which the public was boiling over with apathy. Those who wanted to see the triumph of democracy were losing patience with the Government, and their impatience found expression in Parliament in an amendment to the Address at the opening of Parliament in 1909.

It was moved by Mr. Ponsonby, an English member, and was in the following terms: "And further desire humbly to submit that the repeated rejection by the House of Lords of measures of capital importance, which have been passed in this House by overwhelming majorities, has made it imperative that proposals should be embodied in a Bill for the consideration of Parliament, this session, for regulating the relations of the two Houses of Parliament, in accordance with the resolution of this House of 26th of June, 1907, declaring that in order to give effect to the will of the people, as expressed by their elected representatives, it is necessary that the power of the other House to alter or reject Bills passed by this House should be so restricted by law as to secure that within the limits of a single Parliament the final decision of the Commons shall prevail." [1]

Mr. Ponsonby was a Liberal member, as were those who supported him. He had no desire to harm a Liberal Government; he did not wish, he said, to put this Government in a hole, but to block up the hole into which they seem determined to creep. Eighteen months after the passing of the late Premier's resolutions nothing was done. There had been threats against the House of Lords, denunciations of a reactionary assembly,

[1] *Hansard.*

abuse of hereditary legislators who dared to cross the path of the people. But it was talk and nothing more. Mr. Ponsonby likened the Liberal leaders to the champion of ancient days who threw down his glove, and when his opponent picked it up, showing his willingness to fight, begged for more time, as he was not quite ready yet. The Government appeared to be afraid to enter the lists. The people were ready to fight, but they hated hesitancy and indecision; they felt that the Government was willing to suffer rebuffs from the House of Lords. And he predicted that popular enthusiasm against the House of Lords must suffer a perceptible diminution.

Another disgusted Liberal expressed his regret that "the trumpet sounded so valiantly gave forth, at present, so hesitating and so uncertain a sound". And Mr. Balfour, the Unionist leader, taunted the Government with not meaning business; there was nothing brave about them but their speeches.

Mr. Asquith's attitude was characteristic. He was disgusted with the House of Lords; he would carry out the resolutions of 1907 and effectually curb their power. But he would not allow them to fix the time of dissolution, nor the circumstances in which it was to take place. There were several measures yet to be passed—the Irish Land Bill, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, the Budget for 1909. But if the Lords claimed, as they did, that the Bills they had mutilated or rejected since 1906 were not popular measures, they could claim equal justification if they mutilated or rejected the Bills yet to come. Nor could Mr. Asquith deny that in 1906 alone the Liberals had created sixteen peers, one for every three weeks; and surely if the Liberals really hated the House of Lords, and branded it as "a reactionary assembly which always opposed Liberal measures", it was no place for an honest Liberal to go. The fact was, as Mr. William Redmond pointed out, the ordinary Liberal, no more than the Unionist, did not believe that the Government was sincere, for if it had been there would be no Liberals sent to the House of Lords.[1]

A Prime Minister with even a little of the fervour and indig-

[1] *Hansard.*

nation of Mr. Gladstone would arouse enthusiasm and inspire confidence, and the people would follow where he led. But a Prime Minister who talked instead of acting, who uttered threats which he did nothing to carry out, who attacked the House of Lords and sent his own followers and friends there, inspired neither fear in the minds of the Peers nor confidence in the minds of the masses. If we add to this that there is a large element of the flunkey in many Englishmen, that, as Mr. William Redmond reminded the House of Commons, the ordinary Englishman likes his liquor and his lord, we cannot be surprised at what followed.

The Lords, in no way afraid, mutilated the Land Bill out of all recognition and rejected the Budget of 1909. And instead of public indignation being roused against them, the by-elections showed that it was the Liberal Government which was losing ground. In 1908 they were beaten in Devonshire, Hereford, Peckham, at Manchester, Huggerston, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.[1] And in 1909 there were Liberal defeats at Ripon, Stratford-on-Avon, and Bermondsey.[2] Strong talk and feeble action, hesitancy and indecision, are not liked by Englishmen, and by the end of 1909 there could be little doubt that the flood-tide of Liberalism was ebbing.

One of these Liberal defeats was that of a Cabinet Minister, Mr. Churchill, at Manchester. This was brought about by the Irish vote having been given to the Tory. It was a reminder to the Irish leaders that they had it in their power to punish treachery and backsliding, and a reminder to their Liberal allies that the Irish Councils Bill of 1907 was no adequate substitute for Home Rule, and that Home Rule itself must not be indefinitely postponed. And the Irish leaders ought to have seriously examined their consciences when they found the Irish Party candidate in Leitrim opposed by a Sinn Feiner, who advocated abstention from Parliament altogether, and yet got nearly 1200 votes. The warning, however, was unheeded. They supported the Liberals, though the Liberals imposed fresh taxation on Ireland; they supported them without getting anything substantial in return, and

[1] *Annual Register.* [2] *Annual Register*, 1909.

in the end of 1909 the Irish Party had lost ground in Ireland, even as the Liberals had lost ground in England.

For the time, however, the shortcomings of these Irish leaders were allowed to pass unchallenged. The activities of the people were turned away from Parliamentary work and spent on a different object. In the beginning of 1909 an agitation had sprung up round the question of the Irish language, and what was to be its status in the new National University. The agitation continued during the year and must have been a source of great relief to politicians, whose incapacity and want of success would otherwise have attracted unfriendly criticism.

In the opinion of those who took the English view, and who looked to England for guidance in educational matters, there could be no doubt as to what the position of Irish should be. The Statute of Kilkenny in 1367 prescribed that if any English, or Irish living among the English, were to use the Irish language among themselves " contrary to this ordinance and thereof be attainted, his lands and tenements, if he have any, shall be seized into the hands of his immediate lord, until he shall come to one of the places of our lord the King, and find sufficient security to adopt and use the English language, and then he shall have restitution of his said lands ". But the poor landless man also was not forgotten. For the Statute provided that for him who had neither lands nor tenements, and was guilty of the crime of speaking Irish—" his body shall be taken by any of the officers of our lord the King and committed to the nearest jail ". Further, it provided that " beneficed persons of holy Church living amongst the English shall use the English language, and if they do not, that their ordinaries shall have the issue of their benefices until they use the English language ".[1]

These penalties for speaking Irish—loss of property for those who had such, loss of liberty for those who had not, loss of benefice for ecclesiastics—were indeed drastic enough. But it is well known that the end aimed at was not attained. Instead of the Irish giving up their language, those of English descent gave up

[1] Clause III, Statute of Kilkenny.

the language of their ancestors; and when the Pander wrote in the sixteenth century, Irish was common enough even within the small district called the Pale. Outside this the Irish chiefs spoke Irish, as did the Anglo-Irish, such as the Butlers, Burkes, and Fitzgeralds. This state of things excited the wrath of Henry VIII himself, and in 1537 he wrote an angry letter to the city of Galway, which had always looked to England for inspiration. It appears that even here Irish had supplanted English, and Henry ordered that every inhabitant within the city should endeavour to speak English, and to use themselves after the English fashion, and that parents should put their children to school to learn English. If they failed " to fulfil these our commandments ", they forfeited his favour and will arouse " our indignation and high displeasure ".[1]

About the same time Cowley, a provincial English official, suggested that no Irish chief should be taken into favour by the King, and enjoy the peaceable possession of his lands, who would not forsake the Irish laws, habits, and customs and set his " children to learn English ".[2] Henry had set up as a reformer in religion, and, having changed his faith, invited the Irish to follow his example. His successors followed in his footsteps, and henceforth in Ireland the Catholic religion and the Irish language were equally banned. An Act was passed in 1537 entitled " An Act for the Irish habit and tongue to be eschewed ". It was intended to induce the rude and ignorant Irish people to acquire " a knowledge of Almighty God, and of the good and virtuous obedience which by His most holy precepts and commandments they owed to their princes and superiors ". It provided that the Irish habit and apparel should be abolished, and that all the King's true subjects in the land should speak the English tongue, and should bring up their children in such places where they should have occasion " to learn the English tongue, language, and condition ". And for providing means for acquiring this knowledge a school was to be set up in each parish.[3] It does not, however,

[1] *State Papers, Henry VIII*, pp. 309–10. [2] *State Papers*, pp. 347–8.
[3] *Irish Statutes.*

appear that any such schools were set up, at least no schools worthy of the name.

In the reign of Elizabeth an Act was passed in 1570 for setting up Diocesan Free Schools, the declared purpose being to reclaim the ignorant Irish "who lived in a rude and barbarous state". The Royal Free Schools of James I, the Erasmus Smith Schools of a later date, and the Charter Schools of the eighteenth century were all intended to make the Irish English and Protestant. And when Trinity College was established in 1593, to supply higher education to the Irish, Queen Elizabeth described it as a College for learning, "whereby knowledge and civility might be increased by the instruction of our people, whereof have usually heretofore used to travel into France, Italy, and Spain, to get learning in such foreign territories, whereby they have been infected with Popery and other ill qualities".[1]

In such a University, which aimed at undermining the people's faith, and which looked askance at Irish ideas, Irish studies were ignored.[2] One of its students, William Daniel, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, translated the New Testament into Irish. But in such work he stood alone, an island amid a wide extending sea; for his fellow-students knew nothing about Irish, and got no encouragement to learn it.[3] Bedell, during his term of office as Provost (1626–9), encouraged Irish studies, but his policy was soon reversed by Wentworth and Laud. There was to be no more teaching of Irish in Trinity College, as there was to be no Popery; and during the long night of the penal times Trinity College was anti-Irish and anti-Catholic, always on the side of reaction and ascendancy, its face ever turned from Ireland, and ever turned to the larger and more powerful island on the other side of the Irish Sea. The Catholic who went to Trinity College for his degree soon ceased to be anything but a Catholic in name, and the Nationalist shed his Nationalist convictions and began to look to England for his ideals. There were exceptions, and notable ones, but they were exceptions and not the rule.

[1] Stubbs, Appendix III. [2] Mahaffy, *An Epoch in Irish History*, p. 97.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

If justice were to be done to the Irish Catholics, they would have been put on terms of complete equality with the Irish Protestants. If this were seriously intended by the British Parliament, the National University would have been provided with an endowment at least equal to that of Trinity College, an endowment sufficient to set up well-equipped laboratories, to purchase books and rare manuscripts. Even thus provided, it could not hope at once, nor for a long time, to acquire the prestige of a University three centuries old; but it ought to have equally extensive buildings and playgrounds, equally capacious lecture-rooms and class halls, ample residential accommodation for its teaching staff and for its students.

Under all these heads inferiority was still maintained. And yet the Act under which the National University came into existence marked a noted change in the policy of the British Parliament towards Ireland. For it was now conceded for the first time that the Irish Catholics had the right to get higher education at the expense of the State, and not according to English but according to Irish ideas. The National University of Ireland need not be a mere copy of an English University, but might be, and ought to be, as its name implied, Irish in spirit, in outlook, in ideals. Its Senate was from the very beginning overwhelmingly Catholic and Nationalist, and so were the Governing Bodies of its constituent colleges; and after a few years these bodies were to be elected, and as such would reflect the interests and opinions of the academic elements within the University and the popularly elected bodies outside. And the Senate and the Governing Bodies had the whole management of the University in their hands: the appointment and dismissal of its professors and lecturers, the shaping of the curricula, the making of its statutes, the awarding of its honours and degrees.

Half a century before this date Newman had reminded his students at Dublin that a University should teach all knowledge, that the very name of University is inconsistent with restrictions of any kind. It should be a school where all faculties were taught, and hence would be altogether incomplete without a faculty of

Theology.[1] But a Protestant Parliament was not willing to endow a faculty of Theology for Catholic students, and would only allow Catholic teaching to be endowed by private benefaction. England had no objection to a Louvain University in Belgium, but would not set up such in Ireland with all its doctrinal differences and clashing creeds. Outside of this, however, there was no restriction as to the subjects which might be taught. They might be few or many; it was for the Senate to determine.

Certain subjects are common to all Universities, and a knowledge of these would be required from the student when he presents himself for matriculation. He should know Latin, so that he might get in touch with the great masters of ancient literature, as well as with the learning and civilization of mediæval times. He must know English and French or German, and he must know mathematics and physical science. But is this enough to make a cultured Irishman; and ought it not to be the main purpose of an Irish University to send forth cultured Irishmen from its walls? The Gaelic League took the matter in hand, protesting that no man could be called an educated Irishman who did not know the Irish language and Irish history. Therefore a demand was made that these two subjects should be essential for every student who wished to matriculate into the National University.

On this subject much oratory was expended during the years 1909 and 1910. Some, indeed, who made speeches, and moved resolutions, and wrote letters to the newspapers, knew little about University matters. And some who most loudly demanded compulsory Irish knew little Irish themselves. Mr. John MacNeill was a man of a different stamp, a cultured, scholarly man, eminently patriotic and sincere, a man who had a profound knowledge of the language and literature and history of Ireland.

Presuming that social life in Ireland must be Irish, allowing free play for the finer instincts of the Irish mind, or it must be provincial, artificial, obsequious, and vulgar, he judged that there could be no hesitation as to an Irishman's choice, no doubt in his mind as to what the National University ought to be. If it could

[1] *Idea of a University.*

give its students only a second-rate English culture, if its products were but poor copies of the English gentleman, the National University would stand condemned, utterly unworthy of the name it bore. Such a University would be entitled to no respect, either from rich or poor. The Irishman who could afford to go elsewhere would never darken its doors, and the student educated within its walls would have no pleasant memories of his student days.

But how could the Irish National University be the nursing mother of a distinctively Irish culture if it did not teach its students the language and the literature of the land in which they were born? "An Irishman", says Father Donlevy, author of the well-known Irish Catechism, "without Irish is an incongruity." It was the language of his ancestors, the language of the great monastic schools whose fame attracted students from every country in Western Europe. It was the language of the Saints whose virtues are a precious national inheritance, the language of the ancient law books and of the ancient lawgivers, the language in which the bards sang and in which the chiefs ordered their clansmen to battle. Cut off an Irishman from the language and history of Ireland and you make him a stranger in his own land; his country's past becomes a sealed book to him; the names of the localities in which he lives, of its mountains, rivers, lakes, and valleys, become unpronounceable and unintelligible to him. The cromlech and the round tower, the broken arch and the ruined abbey, convey to him no message. The songs and the tales which softened the heart of his English conquerors, and made them more Irish than the Irish themselves, are to him but meaningless jargon. He can't appreciate them, because men don't appreciate, and can't appreciate, what they can't understand.

Mr. MacNeill was quite aware of the difficulty of making the Irish language the national language in the new University. It would have been easy to do so when Trinity College was founded, at the close of the sixteenth century. It would have been easy in the seventeenth century, for it was then that such

noted works were written as *The Annals of the Four Masters* and Keating's *History of Ireland*. And a country which produced in that age such scholarly men as Colgan and Lynch and Keating would have probably sent forth from its University much greater men than those produced by Trinity College.

During the eighteenth century, even during the darkest days of the penal times, the cultivation of Irish as a spoken and as a written language went on. Tainted with the poison of proselytism, the State schools, such as the Diocesan Free Schools, and the Charter Schools, were avoided by the masses of the people. Gathered in some ruined building, and often under a sheltering hedge, they were taught by some heroic schoolmaster on whose head a price was set. And they learned in the old tongue the tales and legends, the genealogies and history of the past, as well as the usual subjects of arithmetic and writing and geography, which are taught in elementary schools. At the end of the eighteenth century, as at the beginning of it, Irish was the national language spoken in the houses and in the market-place, preached from the altars, and taught in the hedge school.

The National Education System became its most formidable foe. The persistent efforts of past centuries to utilize all State education as an instrument of Protestant bigotry, for the Catholics made their schools at first an object of suspicion. In time the suspicion disappeared, but even while it remained, the inherited thirst of the people for knowledge drove the children to the National Schools. A bilingual system of teaching would have been the system suited to the people's needs, where children would be taught English as well as other subjects, through the medium of Irish, the language the children knew. But from the first the Irish language was banned, and the strange spectacle was seen of children whose tongues were habituated to Irish trying to stumble painfully through books written in an alien tongue. Irish history also was banned, except such as perverted historical facts.

The process of anglicization begun in the primary soon spread to the secondary schools. English and English history were

studied as essential subjects in the college curriculum, but Irish and Irish history were neglected. The children who had passed through the National Schools soon ceased to know the language of their ancestors; and the boys and girls who had passed through the colleges and convents not only were ignorant of it, but were ashamed of it. Sent forth to make their way in the world, their ambition was to be like the upper class in their locality; and as these had always copied English ways, the college boy and the convent girl, cutting themselves adrift from native culture, looked to England for their inspirations and their ideals. They read English history, English fiction, English poetry; they admired English art, as far as they were capable of admiring any art. They bought vulgar English newspapers, and frequented the theatre to see low-class English plays. They imitated the English manners of dressing and indulged in English games, and happy was the young man or woman who could speak with an English accent. The fact was, while they had ceased to be Irish, they had not become English, and were but poor copies of the educated English.

In 1812, 11 out of 14 spoke Irish in Munster; in Connaught, 13 out of 14; in Meath and Westmeath, 5 out of 7; in Kilkenny, the land of the pro-English Butlers, it was 5 out of 7; and even in Tyrone, 7 out of 13—just more than half were Irish-speaking. The anglicizing influences at work, beginning with the National Schools, were so effective that in three-quarters of a century Irish in most of these counties had disappeared, and had fled, as if for refuge, to Connemara and Kerry and Donegal. To revive a language with which time had dealt so severely was like calling the dead back from the tomb. Yet the attempt had been made, and with some success. Under the auspices of the Gaelic League, Irish was now studied as an extra subject in the primary schools, and its study had been so encouraged in the intermediate schools that in one year 5000 students presented themselves for examination in Irish at the intermediate examinations.

But while 5000 students in a given year presented themselves for Irish at the intermediate examinations, in the same year less

than sixty students presented themselves for Irish at the matriculation examination of the Royal University. The students, no doubt, wanted to get their degrees with the least amount of trouble, and as long as Irish was a merely optional subject they would pass it by. Hence Mr. MacNeill concluded that to revive the Irish language, as it ought to be, it must be made an essential subject for matriculation in the National University.

There were strong objections to this being done, and they were put by many writers and speakers in the year 1909. It was objected that if Irish were made essential, many Catholics would be kept out of the University, as neither they nor their parents wanted to have Irish. But if these Irish Catholics wished to be English and not Irish, if they were bereft of all national spirit, they might well be spared. Mr. MacNeill noted that in Brussels the French-speaking children were compelled to learn Flemish in the primary schools, and the Flemish-speaking children were compelled to learn French, and this irrespective of their own wishes or the wishes of their parents. There was, surely, equally strong reason to have the English-speaking Irishman in Ireland compelled to learn Irish as a preparation for entrance to an Irish National University.

It was objected that if Irish were made essential it would exclude Protestant students. But this was only partially true. Some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Gaelic League, and some of the most ardent students of the language, were Protestants. If the remaining Protestants persisted in seeking inspiration from England, and in proving that an Irish Protestant and an Anti-Irishman were the same thing, it was regrettable, but there was no reason why an Irish National University should not be Irish.

It was objected, further, that essential Irish at matriculation would exclude students from foreign countries. But such students would necessarily be few, and Mr. MacNeill would make an exception in their case.

Finally, it was objected that there were many students who had no opportunity of studying Irish; and to exclude such from

the National University would be penalizing those who were not to blame. In such cases the difficulty might be met by having a time limit imposed. Until that limit was reached, students need not take Irish at matriculation, and, meantime, all others must master a sufficient amount of Irish to enable them to pass within the University gates. They could learn it at the schools and colleges, and at Gaelic classes, and these Gaelic classes were being held all over Ireland, as well as among the Irish abroad.

Some of Mr. MacNeill's arguments were used by many others, but were usually put in a cruder form. The Gaelic League took charge of the agitation, and the Gaelic army was handled with considerable skill. When there was a feis, speeches were made and resolutions passed. There was a deluge of newspaper letters and articles. Public meetings were specially convened and largely attended, at which strong language was used, and very uncomplimentary epithets were hurled at the heads of those who did not favour essential Irish. Such persons were described as Whigs, West Britons, the rotten elements in Irish life; and not infrequently the orators themselves had but a very superficial knowledge of the Irish language or of Irish history.[1]

At the inaugural meeting of the University College Gaelic Society in November, 1908, a paper was read on " The Status of Irish in the New Universities " by the auditor; and it was strongly urged by the chief speakers that Irish should be an essential subject at matriculation. The Very Rev. Dr. Delany, who fought so long and so well on the Catholic side, dissented from this view, though he would give Irish an honoured place in the University curriculum. Other well-known educational authorities, such as Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam, and Dr. Mannix, the President of Maynooth, both, like Dr. Delany, Senators of the University, were prepared to go as far as Dr. Delany. They would give Irish not only an honoured but a privileged place. They were ready to found Chairs in the Colleges, to establish scholarships, to give exhibitions and prizes, so that

[1] The whole case made by Mr. MacNeill is contained in his pamphlet—*Irish in the National University: A Plea for Irish Education.*

the study of the national language might be encouraged. The Standing Committee of the Bishops at their first meeting in January, 1909, were willing to aid in the same direction, though they declared against compulsion.

But this was not enough. No mere voluntary study would do, and at a public meeting at the Rotunda, in the last days of 1908, those Senators who did not favour compulsion were attacked as West Britons. Similar language was used at many other public meetings and in many letters to the newspapers; and in the National Convention held in February, 1909, a resolution was proposed in favour of essential Irish. And it was carried in spite of the vehement opposition of Mr. John Dillon.

But it was the action of the County Councils, more than anything else, which brought success to the Gaelic League demand. In the Universities Act was a provision allowing County Councils to strike a rate for the promotion of University education. This provision was used by the Gaelic leaders with considerable skill. The County Councillor who favoured essential Irish was lauded in the newspapers and in public speeches as a patriot; while the County Councillor who took the opposite side was held up to public scorn. In the circumstances it was not difficult to get a motion passed at a County Council meeting; and the form the motion took was to promise to strike a rate if Irish were made an essential subject, to refuse to strike a rate if it were not. In the hands of the Gaelic League there was no more powerful lever than this.

The fight was long and bitter. A good many patriotic Irishmen thought that it would be quite sufficient to give Irish an honoured place in the University curriculum. And the University Senate, as well as the Governing Bodies of the constituent colleges, were quite ready to establish Chairs of Irish, to endow scholarships, to liberally subsidize Irish linguistic and historical research. They thought that this would be sufficient encouragement to Irish studies, and that to go further would exclude many students, and so injure the new University at the very threshold of its existence. But the pressure from outside was too great to be resisted. The

tumult of the platform was carried into the quiet of the academic assembly, and heat and passion were sometimes substituted for academic calm. The Senate gave way after the question had been long and acrimoniously discussed, and in June, 1910, the Irish language and Irish history were put down as essential subjects for matriculation in the National University.

The fight was over, and now that the victory was won it remained to reward the Gaelic League advocates for their activity. In the Dublin College a Celtic Faculty was set up, with well-endowed Chairs in Irish—Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern, and with Chairs in Irish History and Archæology; and to these positions were appointed those who had been prominent in the recent agitation. It was in accordance with the fitness of things that an Irish Chair and lectureship should be also established in Galway, which was in the centre of an Irish-speaking province. Indeed, in many districts in Galway and Mayo Irish was still the only language spoken. There was also established a Chair of Irish Language, and a Chair of Irish Archæology in the University College, Cork.

So far the output of works dealing with Irish and Irish history from these colleges is little. But the University is only in its infancy, and as the years roll on it may be assumed that such works will appear.

CHAPTER V

The Balance of Power

The Budget of 1909 occupied for many months the time of the House of Commons. It was introduced in the end of April, nor was it till the end of October that it passed its third reading and was sent to the House of Lords. There the whole forces of reaction and privilege opposed it — the great landowner, the mine-owner, the brewer and publicans. The Church of England allied itself with the rich; the capitalist press uttered threats against revolutionary changes and predatory taxation, and indulged in many prophecies of the ills that would surely come. In the House of Commons numbers were on the Liberal side; but the Opposition had many able men, and although there was little hope at any time of defeating the Budget, its progress was unduly delayed.

In the House of Lords these conditions were reversed. Ascendancy and privilege were there enthroned. The Peers were landlords and brewers, the privileged class, the idle rich, nor was anyone more unprogressive than some of those former Liberals whom successive Liberal Governments had promoted to the peerage. Since 1906, ever since the Liberals had come into office, the Lords had been rejecting or mutilating Liberal measures, and thus thwarting reform. But there was a difficulty in dealing with the Budget, for finance was forbidden ground. The Lords could, without doubt, throw out an Education Bill, but a money Bill was held to be beyond their control. This was reserved to the House of Commons and must not be touched by the House of Lords. In theory the Lords could reject a money Bill; they had the right, but the right had not been exercised; having fallen

into such desuetude, it was as if the right had been voluntarily abandoned.

This, however, was not the view of some of the more militant among the Peers when the Finance Bill was sent to the House of Lords in November, 1909. Lord Lansdowne, the leader of the Opposition, proved to his own satisfaction that the Lords had a perfectly legal right to reject even a money Bill. He admitted it was not usual, but the Budget of 1909 was revolutionary, and had not the approval of the people, and it ought not, therefore, to be passed until the people had been consulted. If the people then declared in its favour, the Lords would give way and bow, as they always had done, to the considered judgment of the people.[1] Nor could it be denied that the people, the English people at least, did not view the Lords' conduct with indignation, or serious alarm. Mr. Stead declared that " the country ought to be dancing mad ",[2] because of the rejection of so many Bills by unrepresentative legislators. But the country was not mad with indignation, and the by-elections showed in the defeat of Liberal candidates that the Opposition view was not unpopular.

Lord Morley gravely admonished Lord Lansdowne and his friends to pause before exercising rights which had not been used, and which it would be dangerous to exercise. It would be arrogating to the House of Lords the control of taxation; it would be assuming power to force a dissolution by refusing supplies; it would be demanding a new House of Commons whenever the existing House of Commons incurred the displeasure of the House of Lords; it would be substituting for representative supremacy the supremacy of an oligarchy; and it would dislocate the whole financial machinery for the year.[3] These reasons were strong, and no doubt appealed strongly to Lord Lansdowne, who though a Tory was a statesman. But there were others among the Peers who would not be restrained, many of them ignorant, thoughtless, and ill-informed, and who rarely attended in Parliament. Lord Curzon, however, was a man of a different stamp, a public man of ability,

[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 247–8. [2] *Review of Reviews*, Jan., 1909.
[3] *Annual Register*, pp. 251–2.

but utterly out of sympathy with all popular reform. Even worse was Lord Milner, lately made a Peer, a man born and educated in Germany, and with all the pride and insolence of a Prussian *Junker*. His advice was to throw out the Budget and "damn the consequences".[1] This combination was successful, and the Budget was rejected by 350 to 75 votes.

Mr. Asquith took up the challenge thus flung down, and on the 2nd of December he proposed and had carried in the House of Commons the following resolution: "That the action of the House of Lords in refusing to pass into law the financial provision made by their House for the service of the year is a breach of the Constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the House of Commons". This meant that there would be an early General Election, and early in January, 1910, Parliament was dissolved.

The Liberals had then been four years in office, and during the whole time the Irish Party had been their friends and supporters. The Irish leaders in 1906 had helped them with a manifesto calling on the Irish voters in Great Britain to give the Liberals their votes; and this was done and helped to swell to enormous proportions the Liberal successes at the polls. Since then, in each session of Parliament, the Irish Party could be relied on in the House of Commons. The Irish members voted for the Liberal Education Bill, though its manifest object was to secularize education. They supported the Licensing Bill, and if they did not support the Budget of 1909, they gave it no effective opposition. All they got in return was the University Act of 1908, for which Ireland had to thank the Tories equally with the Liberals; for if the Tories had opposed the Bill it would have been defeated in the House of Lords. The Labourers Act was of some use, as was the Land Act of 1909, even though shorn of its most salutary provisions. But the overtaxation of Ireland still continued, Dublin Castle was still unreformed, and in 1908 Mr. Asquith, on the question of Home Rule, declared that he would not go beyond the Councils Bill of 1907. At the beginning of 1910, as at the

[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 253–4, 258.

beginning of 1906, there was no Home Rule, no relief from over-taxation, no administrative reform.

The Irish sentinel on the watch-tower, challenged as to how Ireland stood, could not reply to the questioning challenge that all was well. But the four gentlemen who ruled the Irish Party and dictated its policy seemed to be satisfied, and the country was gulled with predictions which came to nothing and promises which remained unfulfilled. Early in 1906, before the General Election had taken place, Mr. T. P. O'Connor predicted, in the columns of the New York *American*, that Ireland's prospects were of the brightest, there would be sweeping administrative reform, and the Irish and the Labour members would hold the balance of power. Within the month the Liberals had triumphed, with such a sweeping majority that both Labour and Irish members could be flouted. Mr. Dillon, at Foxford, in January, 1907, predicted that "A measure will be introduced which we can recommend to the acceptance of the Nationalists of Ireland, not as a final settlement of Ireland's claim, but as a substantial instalment consistent with and leading up to the larger policy". In the same speech he attacked Mr. William O'Brien for organizing faction and encouraging cranks.[1] A few days later Mr. Redmond claimed at Waterford that the Irish Party had done well. All that was wanted in the coming session was a united party.[2]

The fulfilment of these prophecies came in a few months in the shape of the Councils Bill, which was rejected with scorn by an Irish National Convention, and on the motion of Mr. Redmond himself. Nor could anybody deny that Mr. Healy was speaking the truth when he declared that "It is the meanest measure that has ever been submitted to Parliament. . . . Had the Unionists been allowed an opportunity of carrying out their policy of Devolution three years ago, the measure would have been a full charter of Irish liberty compared with the wretched scheme now submitted."[3]

At the end of the year Mr. Dillon was again filling the rôle of

[1] *Freeman's Journal*, Jan. 28, 1907. [2] *Freeman's Journal*, Feb., 2 1907.
[3] Letter to the *Independent*, May 14, 1907.

prophet, and both he and Mr. Redmond were equally impatient of criticism. At Tipperary Mr. Dillon made the oracular statement that " In my opinion the cause never was in my lifetime in a stronger or more hopeful position ". Mr. Redmond, on the same day at Wexford, told his audience that " the wave of malice and of hatred against the Irish Party had spent its force." [1] The following day at Drumkeerin, County Leitrim, he warned the people " not to believe the croakers who tell you that the future is black ".[2]

There was, however, no brightening prospect in the new year. There were croakers still, nor were their croakings without reason. In a public letter Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, wrote with great severity of the leaders of the Irish Party. " In the hands of Mr. Dillon and his party the present Home Rule movement is steadily sinking into its grave. . . . It will rise again, but the men who bartered it away for the Liberal alliance will never rise." [3] Dr. O'Dwyer was, as a matter of course, attacked by the party hacks in the press and elsewhere; but his words were prophetic of what, long after, took place, and of the state of things then existing they were true. Home Rule had indeed disappeared below the horizon, and in the year 1909 there was no mention of Ireland in the King's Speech. Nor did the reviews trouble to discuss the matter, though there was plenty of ink expended on such subjects as the German menace, an increased navy, and tariff reform. The South Africans, who had fought the British Empire but a few years before, got a full measure of Home Rule, but the Irish members, who trudged into the Liberal lobbies on every discussion, got nothing but new taxes in Mr. Lloyd George's democratic Budget, and a Land Act which was a mere shadow of what the Irish farmers required.

At the Irish National Convention in February the following resolution was passed unanimously: " That the present burden of taxation on Ireland is far in excess of the taxable capacity of the country, and the Convention declares that any attempt to impose fresh taxation of any kind on Ireland in the Finance Bill of this

[1] *Freeman's Journal*, Oct. 21, 1907. [2] *Ibid.*, Oct. 28.
[3] *Daily Independent*, Oct. 1, 1908.

year, on any pretext, would be a gross violation, not only of every principle of justice, but even of the terms of the Act of Union itself, and calls upon the Irish Party and the Nationalist Organization to resist any such attempt with the utmost vigour". The attitude of the Irish leaders during the discussions on the Finance Bill showed what little attention was paid to the request contained in the resolution. And when Mr. T. M. Healy, at a meeting of the Irish Party, moved that the party should vote against the third reading of the Finance Bill, only nine members of the party supported him. The majority voted, as Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon wished, for abstaining.[1] A few days later Mr. Redmond, at Dublin, denounced as cranks all those who criticized the party attitude on the Finance Bill.

As the General Election of 1910 approached, the speeches of the political leaders, and especially those of Mr. Asquith, were carefully scanned. More than a year had passed since Mr. Redmond told his audience at Wrexham that when the General Election came the electors would be asked to declare their opinion of Home Rule, and if the present party (meaning the Liberals) were returned to power with a majority so obtained "it should lie in the mouth of no one to say that there was no mandate from the leaders to deal with the question of self-government".[2]

The time had now come when the electors were to be consulted, and Mr. Asquith gave forth the war-cry of the Liberals in a great speech to a great meeting in Albert Hall, London. The meeting was described by *The Times* as boiling over with enthusiasm. The forces of democracy were anxious for a strong lead and for strong words in the struggle with the House of Lords, and Mr. Asquith's indictment against the Lords was indeed a formidable one. He recalled how they had nullified educational and licensing reforms; how they had stopped supplies needed for naval defence; how they had endeavoured to meddle with, control and mould, national fir ce; how in their eagerness for tariff reform they had shown their willingness to tax the food of the people. He was determined that an unrepresentative assembly

[1] *Daily Independent*, Nov. 5, 1909. [2] Speech at Wrexham, Nov. 13, 1908.

should not override the considered judgment of those who represented the people, and laid it down as the first duty of the Government to make the Lords' action impossible by a statute embodying the settled doctrine of the Constitution, that it was beyond the Lords' province to meddle in any way with national finance.[1]

The by-elections showed that Mr. Asquith would have no such majority as he had in 1906, even with the cry of "Down with the House of Lords!" It would be necessary to obtain the support of the Irish voters in Great Britain. He had thought little of Ireland since 1906, but now he remembered her wrongs, and told his audience that Ireland was still the main failure of British statesmanship. And he added that the Irish problem could only be solved by a policy which, while explicitly safeguarding the supreme and undeniable authority of the Imperial Parliament, would set up self-government in Ireland in regard to Irish affairs. For such a policy in the new Parliament the hands of the Liberal Party would be perfectly free.[2] Mr. Lloyd George had not even this much to say for Ireland, though he had much to say against the House of Lords and against tariff reform, and much in favour of Welsh Disestablishment. As for the Tory leaders, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon, and others, they wanted tariff reform, they defended the House of Lords, and they attacked Home Rule and the Liberals for their appeal to the Irish vote.

Neither Mr. William O'Brien nor Mr. Healy put much trust in Mr. Asquith; but Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were so pleased that they again advised the Irish voters to poll for the Liberal candidates, and this was done throughout Great Britain.[3]

Most of the prophets expected Unionist gains, and therefore a diminution in the Liberal majority. Some expected a large Unionist majority. Mr. Stead, however, could not believe that the people would surrender their power to a hereditary oligarchy. And he believed that Liberals and Labour combined would have

[1] *Annual Register*. [2] *Times* report.
[3] Mr. Redmond at Manchester, Jan. 9, 1910.

a majority over the Unionists of 200, which, with the Irish vote of 86, would mean a majority of nearly 300 against the House of Lords.[1]

This prophecy, like a good many others, was falsified by events; and when the General Election was over, the Liberals counted 274, the Labour Party 41, the Unionists 272, the Irish Nationalists 83, of whom 11 were Independents, sharing the views of Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Healy. In the last Parliament, even with the enormous majority of the Liberal Party, had the Irish Nationalists acted together and in opposition, they could probably have driven the Liberals from office. But in the Parliament of 1910 they were completely masters of the situation. For with their support the Unionists could form a Government, and without their support the Liberals could not hold office for a single day.

But what would the Liberals do? Mr. Asquith was represented in *Punch* standing in knight's armour by the side of a Boer pony and complaining that he had got but this sort of a horse, though he had asked for a charger. His difficulties were certainly considerable. If he showed any hesitancy about dealing drastically with the House of Lords, he would be deserted both by the Labour and by the Irish members, and would be driven from office. If he went too far against the Lords, he ran the risk of losing the support of some of the moderate Liberals, who differed little from the Unionists, and who wished one day to be Peers themselves. If he refused to put Home Rule in the very front of his programme, Mr. Redmond would be compelled to desert him. But if he gave too great prominence to the Home Rule question, he incurred the displeasure of many in his own party, who in their hearts hated Home Rule, and in their hearts thanked the House of Lords for being irrevocably opposed to it.

Mr. Asquith himself was in sympathy with this attitude. To attract Irish votes he had, on the eve of the General Election, put Home Rule on his programme. But no sooner was the election over than he declared to his constituents that there could be no

[1] *Review of Reviews*, Jan., 1910.

thought of Home Rule until the veto of the Lords had disappeared, and no Home Rule at any time which did not " reserve the complete supremacy of the Imperial Parliament ".[1] One of the Liberal Whips supplemented this by saying that there was no pledge to bring in a Home Rule Bill. This enabled Mr. William O'Brien to say that Mr. Asquith and the Liberal Whips had repudiated their Home Rule pledges now that they had secured the Irish votes in Great Britain. He added that if the Irish were to wait for Home Rule until the House of Lords was abolished, they would have to wait until the crack of doom. Thus driven, Mr. Redmond declared that the Lords' veto must be dealt with at once, even before the Budget. To take the Budget first would be to disgust every real democrat in Great Britain. And the *Annual Register* adds: " It soon became clear that this feeling was widely prevalent, both in the Labour and in the Liberal ranks".[2]

Mr. Asquith was a master of clear and precise language; no man could explain his proposals more clearly. But this clearness was absent from the King's Speech, which was read at the opening of Parliament. " Proposals will be laid before you, with all convenient speed, to define the relations between the Houses of Parliament, so as to secure the undivided authority of the House of Commons over finance and its predominance in legislation. These measures, in the opinion of my advisers, should provide that this House (the House of Lords) should be so constituted and empowered as to express impartially in regard to proposed legislation the functions of initiation, revision, and, subject to proper safeguards, of delay."

In the debate on the Address Mr. Asquith was reminded of his speech in the Albert Hall in December, when he told his audience: " We shall not assume and we shall not hold office, unless we can secure safeguards which experience shows us to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress ". Plain men understood this to mean that the Liberals, given a majority at the elections, would proceed to pass a Veto

[1] Speech at Fife, Jan. 19, 1910.
[2] *Annual Register*, pp. 13–17.

Bill, and had already got guarantees from the King that he would assent to such a Bill himself, and exercise his prerogative by the creation of a sufficient number of Peers to vote down the opposition of the existing House of Lords. But Mr. Asquith was a lawyer-politician and did not understand language as the plain man did. For he now told the House of Commons quite frankly that he had secured no such guarantees, nor had asked for such. Strangely enough, Mr. Redmond accepted this interpretation of Mr. Asquith's Albert Hall speech, and even defended Mr. Asquith, and with some success.

But he took care to say that he would not support the Budget unless there was an assurance from the Government that they would introduce a Veto Bill and pass it into law within the year. The Irish Party would vote for the Budget, but would not pay the price for nothing. Ministers not being willing to agree to this, on a tariff reform amendment from the Unionist side, the Irish abstained from voting, and in a large House the Government had only a majority of 31—285 to 254.[1]

Even this, which was very nearly a defeat, had not a sufficiently chastening effect on Liberal Ministers. They would reform the House of Lords, though they had got no mandate to do so from the constituencies, and they would abolish the Lords' veto in finance and limit it in legislation. But they would proceed by resolution and not by Bill, a dilatory and cumbrous procedure, and quite unnecessary after all the discussion that had taken place. Further, they would have the Finance Bill taken simultaneously with the veto resolutions. Both the Irish and Labour members were dissatisfied, and Mr. Asquith agreed that the veto resolutions would be taken first and sent to the Lords, and then the Finance Bill would be introduced.[2]

But the position was not yet quite clear, chiefly owing to the shuffling and evasion of the Liberal leaders. At the election Mr. Asquith left his supporters under the impression that he would not remain in office unless he got guarantees from the Crown that the Liberal policy regarding the Lords' veto would

[1] *Hansard's Reports.* [2] *Ibid.*

be carried if it was backed by a Liberal majority in the House of Commons. After the election Mr. Asquith's supporters were told that he had not even asked for such guarantees. But there was no doubt that the General Election had returned a majority, and a large one, against the continuance of the veto, that this was the most pressing question, and yet Mr. Asquith wanted the Budget first and the veto afterwards. Under pressure from the Irish and Labour members this order was abandoned, and Mr. Asquith took the veto first. But he would not proceed by Bill, but by a series of resolutions, on the passing of which a Bill founded on them was to be introduced. An able Liberal member, Mr. M'Curdie, confessed that he was puzzled, and so were his friends. To send a Bill to the Lords and have it rejected would certainly necessitate a dissolution and the intervention of the Royal prerogative. But he did not understand that such a result would follow the rejection of resolutions. It looked, he thought, as if the Parliament of 1910 was following in the footsteps of its predecessor, and was simply ploughing the sands.[1]

In spite of this appeal Liberal Ministers would not be explicit. To every question as to their intentions Mr. Asquith answered with the familiar " Wait and see ", and the resolutions were proceeded with, and finally passed on the 14th of April in the following form:

1. " That it is expedient that the House of Lords be disabled by law from rejecting or amending a Money Bill, but that any such limitation by law shall not be taken to diminish or qualify the existing rights of the House of Commons."
   [The Speaker was to decide what was or was not a Money Bill.]
2. " That it is expedient that the powers of the House of Lords, as respects Bills other than Money Bills, be restricted by law, so that any such Bill which has passed the House of Commons in three successive sessions and having been sent up to the House of Lords, at least one

[1] *Hansard*, April 12, 1910.

month before the end of the session, has been rejected by that House in each of these sessions, shall become law without the consent of the House of Lords, on the Royal Assent being declared; provided that at least two years shall have elapsed between the date of the first introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons and the date on which it passes the House of Commons for the third time."

3. "That it is expedient to limit the durations of Parliament to five years."

These resolutions were passed by large majorities. Then a Bill embodying them was introduced and read a first time. It was called the Parliament Bill. Mr. Asquith declared that if the Lords, when presented with it, were to reject it, or refuse to consider it, the Government would then give certain advice to the Crown, and if, as a result, the Bill were not put on the Statute book, he and his colleagues would either resign their offices or recommend a dissolution of Parliament.[1]

The Budget was then taken in hand. It was a repetition of the Budget of 1909, and continued, as far as Ireland was concerned, the injustice of the preceding year. Mr. Redmond disliked it; but his contention was that the abolition of the Lords' veto was everything, because it would smooth the path of Home Rule. Every Budget coming from the British Parliament was an injustice to Ireland. But such injustices would cease when Home Rule was the law of the land and an Irish Government had the moulding of its own Finance Bill. Therefore Mr. Redmond and his party voted for the veto resolutions, so that the Lords' opposition to Home Rule could be overcome.

Mr. William O'Brien did not take this view. He had returned to Parliament at the General Election, had established a daily paper in Cork, and had in March formed a separate party under the name of "The All-for-Ireland Party". It consisted of eleven members of Parliament, including Mr. O'Brien himself and

[1] *Hansard's Reports*, Aug. 14.

Brooke Hughes

MAURICE HEALY

Vandyk

J. J. CLANCY

Ernest H. Mills

WILLIAM REDMOND

Lafayette

PROFESSOR T. M. KETTLE

Mr. T. M. Healy. On the Budget debate in April, Mr. O'Brien told how he had made efforts to get concessions for Ireland and had interviews with Mr. Lloyd George. At the same time Messrs. Redmond, John Dillon, and T. P. O'Connor had been holding interviews with Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. O'Brien was anxious that a joint demand should be made by all the Irish Nationalist members, believing that such would not be refused. He could not see that the veto resolutions were a sufficient price for the Irish vote on the Budget; it was a bargain by which Ireland was " to be sold for a shadow ". Mr. T. M. Healy was equally strong, and was specially severe on Mr. Redmond. He was being fooled by Mr. Asquith; he was a weakling, without an ounce of political backbone; a mere tool of the Liberals. And he also made it impossible for the Liberal Government to grant concessions. For he had published it to the world in meeting after meeting that he had the friendliest interviews with Mr. Lloyd George, and that everything Ireland wanted would be hers for the asking. These were not the tactics of a capable leader. For the Unionists would tell the public, as they did, that English Liberals were simply the slaves of Mr. Redmond and must do what he wished. Thus taunted, the Liberals would not be in a conceding mood; and in fact the concessions given were of trifling account, for the whisky tax still remained.

Yet Mr. Redmond was satisfied, for the passing of the Parliament Bill meant the passing of Home Rule.[1] As usual Mr. Dillon went further. He regarded the Liberals, especially Mr. Lloyd George, as the lifelong friends of Ireland, and was ready to admit that " If we take the financial record of the Government since they took office in 1906, they have treated Ireland more generously than any Government since the Act of Union ". The injustice inflicted by the Budget had been for party purposes grossly exaggerated. The concessions obtained by himself and Mr. Redmond covered three-fourths of the grievances of which they had to complain, and this though the whisky tax, the stamp duties, and the increased legacy duty remained. Finally, Mr. Dillon

[1] *Hansard*, April 18.

wound up with a prophecy that the concessions obtained in 1910 were as nothing compared with those they would be sure to get in the next year.[1] Mr. Devlin was even more pronounced in his support of the Government, and boldly avowed that " he rejoiced to be able to vote for the Budget ", and was prepared to defend it on Irish platforms as well as in the House of Commons. Mr. Clancy did not go quite so far as this; but he described the concessions given as valuable, though he could not deny and did not deny that the Budget added fresh burdens to Ireland, already weighed down with overtaxation.[2]

On the third reading of the Finance Bill Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy went into the lobby against the Government, while Mr. Redmond and his followers went into the Liberal lobby. By their aid the Government was saved from defeat, and the Budget passed the House of Commons. In the House of Lords the opposition of the previous year disappeared, and the Finance Bill became law, with all its merits and defects.

When it came to proceeding with the Parliament Bill, founded on the veto resolutions, the Government slackened speed. It was three years since the veto resolutions of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman had been voted, and it was therefore quite plain that Mr. Asquith and his friends did not regard as specially urgent that measure of constitutional reform. There was, in fact, a reluctance to join issue with the House of Lords, and already there was much talk of reforming the House of Lords rather than abolishing its powers.

Meantime, on the 6th of May, Edward VII died, and this event silenced for a moment the shouts of the political combatants, and even gave a new and unlooked for direction to the whole political situation. The dead King had been known as Edward the Peacemaker, having done much, it was thought, to prevent war and preserve the peace of Europe. He had in reality, by drawing France and Russia and England more closely together, done much to isolate Germany and to strengthen his own country should the expected contest with Germany come. But if peace had been preserved on the Continent by Edward the Peacemaker,

[1] *Hansard*, April 19. [2] *Hansard*, April 25.

it seemed congruous that peace should be made at home in the presence of his open grave, and two powerful Unionist journals, *The Observer* and *The Morning Post*, advocated a conference on the veto between the opposing political parties. *The Times* followed with a suggestion of a conference between the rival leaders. The suggestion found favour with the Unionists and with the half-hearted Liberals, who were not unfriendly to the House of Lords, and in the middle of June the first meeting of the conference was held.

There were four representatives on each side. On the Liberal side were Messrs. Asquith, Lloyd George, Birrell, and Lord Crewe. On the Unionist side were Messrs. Balfour and Austen Chamberlain and Lords Lansdowne and Cawdor.

Friendly as the relations were between the Irish Party and the Liberals, and constant as had been the support of Mr. Redmond, he was not even consulted about the conference; and while it sat with closed doors he knew nothing of what transpired within. He was displeased, as he had good reason to be. Edward VII numbered many of his best friends among the Liberals, and was believed to be not unfriendly to Home Rule. But the new king, George V, counted his personal friends chiefly among Unionists, and could not therefore be held to be a friend of Ireland in her claims. Nor could Ireland expect much from the members of the conference if her destiny was to be decided by them. Mr. Asquith's record as a Home Ruler was poor, and so was the record of Lord Crewe. Mr. Lloyd George, who was so frequently the subject of Mr. Dillon's laudation, was not more sincere; and though he talked much of the idle rich, and poured scorn on the House of Lords, he had little to say of Home Rule. And he was adding to Ireland's overtaxation instead of giving her relief. Mr. Birrell was a better friend, but was too weak to make his power felt with such shifty and unreliable colleagues. The Unionists were, of course, enemies, and could not be blamed for being so, as Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon always spoke of them as such.

In many speeches and on many platforms Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon expressed their dislike of the conference. The best

they could say was that all would be well if the Irish kept united. They did not believe that the issue of the conference would be a set-back for Home Rule; and in the belief that the Liberal leaders would not play them false they supported the Budget for 1910–11, though it continued the whisky tax and the other new taxes imposed on Ireland. This was falsifying the prophecy made by Mr. Dillon in the debates on the previous Budget; for he prophesied that in the next Budget these new taxes would disappear. Mr. Redmond indeed complained, but had not the courage to strike out, and would submit to anything if he could only get the Lords' veto abolished and thus remove the great obstacle to Home Rule. This was his attitude on public platforms, and this was his reason for supporting the Budget. Mr. Healy was irritated. He saw farther than Mr. Redmond and had less faith in the Liberal leaders, and he told Mr. Redmond in Parliament that he would get from these Liberals the price of his support when he had reached the age of Mathusala.[1]

For months the conference proceedings were prolonged, and all the time Parliamentary warfare was suspended. It was thought a good time for Mr. Redmond to visit America, and in October, accompanied by Mr. Devlin and Mr. Boyle, he visited the United States. At the same time Mr. T. P. O'Connor visited Canada. Earlier in the year Mr. Clancy undertook to defend the Irish Party in a pamphlet published at the expense of the National Organization. He undertook to show that the new taxes imposed on Ireland by Mr. Lloyd George were light, that the Irish Party had got valuable concessions. He maintained that the new death duties affected but one-fifth of the Irish farmers, the remaining part being exempt; agricultural land was excluded from the new land tax; and the new stamp duties left marriage settlements unaffected. Mr. Redmond made the most of these concessions in the United States, and so did Mr. O'Connor in Canada. The latter, indeed, seemed ready to accept a very modest form of Home Rule, " a federal scheme for the four kingdoms of the British Isles ". This was putting Ireland on no higher level than Scotland

[1] *Hansard's Reports.*

or Wales, neither of whom wanted Home Rule, and it roused the anger of Mr. Dillon, who declared that it was lowering the flag of Gladstonian Home Rule.[1]

Mr. Redmond did not go quite so far as Mr. O'Connor. But he was profuse in his expressions of loyalty to England and of friendship for the Liberal leaders. They might be trusted, he said, but in any event they could not play Ireland false. He would compel them to do as he wished; "he would make them toe the line". All this greatly pleased Irish-American audiences. They believed that Mr. Redmond was as powerful and as determined as he said he was; that it would be but a short time until the country of their fathers had the chain taken from her limbs; and, as an earnest of their goodwill, they subscribed largely to the Irish Party funds. For the time the Irish at home were as well pleased as the Irish beyond the sea, and when Mr. Redmond landed at Queenstown in November, bringing £40,000 with him as the proceeds of his American tour, he got a reception which even the greatest public leaders might envy.[2]

But while it added to Mr. Redmond's popularity in America to say that he was the master of the British Liberal Party, it did not add to his popularity in Great Britain. Nor did it add to the popularity of his Liberal allies that they were the mere creatures of an Irish leader, that they should dance as Mr. Redmond played. The cry was raised by the Unionists that Mr. Redmond came back with American dollars to overawe English parties. He was described as "the dollar dictator", and Mr. Balfour denounced him at Nottingham as wanting to smash the House of Lords so as to get Home Rule. "Great Britain should manage the affairs of Great Britain."[3] Mr. Garvin, the Editor of *The Observer*, the most brilliant journalist on the Unionist side, was even more vehement and abusive, and, day after day, platform and press appeals were made to English pride.

Mr. Redmond went on his way, declaring at Wexford (Nov. 27) that fifty Budgets were as nothing against Irish liberty; and when

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 273. [2] *Freeman's Journal*, Nov. 13, 1910.
[3] Speech at Nottingham, Nov. 17.

Mr. Asquith, a few days later, told his audience at Fife that the next Liberal Government would bring in a Home Rule Bill, (Speech, Dec. 6), the exultation of Mr. Redmond knew no bounds.

The veto conference had then broken up, and it had broken up because its members could not agree about the limitations of the Lords' veto. As silence had been imposed on each member, it did not transpire that at any time there was a prospect of agreement, nor that other subjects in addition to the veto had been considered. At all events, its abortive termination meant another dissolution, with a fresh appeal to the electors on the veto of the House of Lords. Subsidiary to this was Home Rule, which all good Unionists were willing to submit to a referendum of the people. They were also ready to substitute for the Lords' veto a referendum on contentious legislation; and they were willing to have a reform of the House of Lords which would substitute some form of election for the principle of heredity in legislation.

On these issues the battle was fought in December, and when the election was over, there were 272 Liberals, 271 Unionists, 42 Labour members, 72 in Mr. Redmond's party, and 8 who followed the fortunes of Mr. William O'Brien. Once again the Liberals could only hold office by the support of Irish votes: the Irish Party held the balance of power, and Mr. Redmond was " the dollar dictator " still.

CHAPTER VI

Ploughing the Sands

Mr. Healy's attitude on the Budget of 1909 and on that of 1910 provoked the displeasure of the Irish Nationalist leaders. But these Budgets were disliked by the Irish people, and it was deemed advisable by Mr. Redmond and his colleagues to defend themselves. This they did by attacking Mr. Healy for his factional opposition, for his unfriendly language towards Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George, Ireland's great friends, and for having, in one instance at least, proposed and carried an amendment which did harm instead of good. For Mr. Healy, it was said, had abolished Griffith's valuation as the basis of assessment for Irish licences, substituting a new valuation made in 1880. But Mr. Healy was not a safe man to attack, and was able to show that it was the Irish Party leaders who allowed this to be done by their Liberal friends. Mr. Healy's only crime was that this new assessment should be subject to revision and appeal. The plain design of this Budget was " to enforce a tax on the difference in the value of a house unlicensed and of a house licensed ".[1]

For these offences Mr. Healy was expelled from the Irish Party; and when the General Election came in December, 1910, Mr. Healy found himself opposed by a party candidate in North Louth. His opponent was Mr. Richard Hazelton, who had already a safe seat in North Galway. He had a certain gift of ready speech, and was plausible and showy. But he had little Parliamentary ability, and cut but a poor figure when put side by side with Mr. Healy. Yet he was supported by the whole influence of the

[1] *Irish Times*, Nov. 3, 1910.

party; the money brought home by Mr. Redmond, given by the Irish in America for Irish national purposes, was poured out like water in North Louth; and such was the terrorism practised by his agents and friends that, though Mr. Healy was defeated, Mr. Hazelton was unseated on petition. In the new Parliament, as a result, Mr. Healy was absent, though so many others were left undisturbed in their seats. And these were men who could well be spared, men whose incapacity had already been proved, men without either character or brains.

They could be relied on to indulge in no complaints and no criticism; and it was not desirable to have critics when Parliament opened and not a single reference to Ireland was contained in the King's Speech. The House of Commons was told that proposals would be laid before it " for settling the relations between the two Houses of Parliament, with the object of securing the more effective working of the Constitution ". These proposals were embodied in the Veto Bill, or the Parliament Bill, as it came to be called. Bills were also promised for removing the pauper disqualification for old age pensions, and for insurance against sickness and unemployment. Finally, there was a vague promise of " Bills dealing with other measures of importance ", which would be introduced and proceeded with as time and opportunity allowed. But there was to be no Home Rule Bill, no Bill to deal with housing in cities and towns, none to reclaim waste lands, none to deal with administrative reform.

Mr. Redmond made no complaint, and nothing would have been said about Ireland if an English member, Mr. Malcolmson, had not moved an amendment to the Address, calling on the Liberal Ministers to declare their intentions on Home Rule. From the Unionist standpoint it was not an unreasonable request. Mr. Churchill and Lord Crewe, it appeared, favoured Colonial Home Rule, but the Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreburn, did not agree with this. On the other hand, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Haldane, and Mr. Lloyd George were not disposed to go beyond devolution; and indeed it was not certain that Mr. Lloyd George, with all his professions of radicalism, wished to give Ireland anything except

plausible speeches and increased taxation. Mr. Birrell and Mr. Morley were willing to go as far as Gladstone went.

If he cared, Mr. Malcolmson could have said that the band did not seem inclined to play the same piece; and as for the leader of the band, Mr. Asquith, he could only refer to his Albert Hall speech in the end of 1909. He then emphasized, as he did now in February, 1911, that he was willing to set up an Irish Parliament, with an Irish executive dependent on it, but in all things the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained. When he was asked to say how he could distinguish between local and imperial matters, he could only say "solvitur ambulando". It might be that his Irish Parliament would have little powers, and that the Imperial Parliament might persist in keeping it in servile tutelage.

Yet Mr. Redmond in his speech had no fault to find, no questions to ask, nothing but childlike faith in British Ministers. He never doubted Mr. Asquith, and was quite satisfied with his Albert Hall speech. And yet a wiser and more far-seeing man would be less confiding, especially remembering some other speeches made in the debate. For when Mr. William O'Brien wanted a conference to settle both the veto and Home Rule, the response from Sir Edward Carson was a bitter speech attacking Home Rule, and even devolution, and declaring that nothing could be done for Ireland by an Irish Parliament which could not be done as well by the Parliament at Westminster.[1]

When the debate on the Address was ended, the ground was cleared for the consideration of the veto question, and on the 21st of February Mr. Asquith introduced his Parliament Bill. In the preamble it was set forth that hereafter a second chamber on a popular basis would take the place of the present House of Lords, thus foreshadowing a reform of the second chamber as it stood. But meantime the existing House of Lords would be deprived of all power to interfere with money Bills. And a money Bill must be a Bill certified as such by the Speaker, his judgment being final. Other Bills than money Bills, if passed by the House

[1] *Hansard's Debates.*

of Commons in three successive sessions, even of two different Parliaments, and sent up to the Lords within one month of the end of the session, might, on the third rejection by the Lords, receive the Royal Assent and become law. But two years must have elapsed between its first introduction in the House of Commons and its passing in the third session. Lastly, the duration of Parliament was brought down from seven to five years.

This was the great measure so long foreshadowed, and on which so much eloquence had been expended in the press and on the platform. The mountain had been in labour, and only a mouse had been brought forth. Instead of weakening, this measure would strengthen the House of Lords, and Mr. Stead was right in describing it as " a ridiculously conservative measure ". The House of Lords, it was true, had been accustomed to reject Liberal measures, but whenever Liberal Ministers were determined, and the public outside urged them on, the Lords always yielded. Now they were authorized by Act of Parliament to reject every measure they disliked, and to do it session after session. Meantime the Liberal Party in power might change its creed, or lose its majority, or pressure from outside might abate, and then the measure was lost. Or again, the Speaker might hold peculiar views as to what was a money Bill, and in fact such a case arose before the year 1911 had reached its close. For the Budget of 1911 had failed to get the necessary certificate from the Speaker on its introduction, and if the Lords had used the powers given them by the Parliament Act, the Budget would have been thrown out.[1]

As for Home Rule, it was sure to be rejected as often as the Lords could do so, and it could therefore be delayed until 1913 at the earliest. Nor would this excite any indignation against the Lords, who were merely using the powers given them. Yet Mr. Redmond made no complaint. He did not even support an amendment by an English Radical limiting the powers of the Lords to one rejection. He would not endanger the Liberal Ministry, and Mr. Dillon on the navy estimates in March followed Mr. Redmond's example. He attacked the Government, indeed, for being

[1] *Hansard*, Dec. 1911.

frightened by a senseless scare, but he would not oppose the Government because he wanted the Parliament Bill, and until that was passed he would not weaken the Government which introduced it.[1]

With the Irish leaders taking up this attitude, the Parliament Bill was safe from rejection, or even from amendment. It passed its second reading by a majority of 120, and its third reading by an equally large majority.[2] In the Lords it was amended out of recognition; but when Mr. Asquith announced that the Government could not accept these amendments, the wiser heads among the Unionist Peers gave way, and in August the Parliament Bill became law.[3]

Meantime Mr. Lloyd George had introduced his National Insurance Bill in May. With all their dread of Germany, and their suspicions of her designs, the British were fond of sitting at Germany's feet to learn. German governesses taught British children; German scientists were looked up to in Great Britain; German business methods were admired; British students loved to frequent German Universities; and now Mr. Lloyd George went to Germany to study at first hand what the German Empire had done to safeguard its working-men and working-women from the evils of sickness and unemployment. In some points no doubt the English Bill differed from that on which it was modelled. It was to be administered by the friendly societies in existence, or which would hereafter be formed; while in Germany there was much less self-government and much more bureaucratic management. And in Germany those over seventy, as well as those under that age, would have to contribute something, while in England the State gave the old age pension in its entirety, without any contribution from the recipient.

Certainly it was a comprehensive measure affecting as it did 15,000,000 men and women workers, and would, according to its author, do more to hinder and assuage human suffering than any Bill since the abolition of the Corn Laws. "It is a measure that will relieve untold misery in millions of homes, misery that is

[1] *Hansard*, March 20. [2] *Ibid.*, May 15. [3] *Annual Register*, p. 199.

undeserved, that will help to prevent a good deal of wretchedness, and which will arm the nation to fight until it conquers the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday."[1]

The Bill was to apply universally to the working-classes, who were compelled to insure themselves and to contribute part of the required ninepence per week, the remainder being contributed by the employer and the State. There were, however, exceptions, such as those whose income exceeded £160 per annum and whose labour was not manual labour; agents paid by commission; persons executing small orders on their own account; wives employed by husbands; soldiers and sailors and pensionable employees, either of the Crown or of some local authority. There were certain cases also where persons were not compelled to insure, but might insure voluntarily.

In return for the small contribution of a few pence a week, the insured worker got, for men ten shillings a week, for women seven shillings and sixpence, for the first twenty-six weeks of illness, and in each case five shillings a week after that date. The insured worker also got free medical treatment, and in the case of married women there was a maternity benefit of thirty shillings. In all these cases, while the allowance was being paid the worker, he was relieved from the obligation of contributing. There was disablement benefit to follow sickness benefit; but in such cases, when the age of seventy was reached, both sickness and disablement benefits ceased, and the worker, ceasing to contribute, got his old age pension from the State. The administering society would be called an approved society, having the management of its surplus funds under the direction of a central authority; and as these funds increased there would be additional benefits to the contributing members.

It was calculated that the sum to be raised during the first year would come to £24,500,000, of which the insured workers themselves would supply £12,000,000, their employers £10,000,000, and the State the remaining £2,500,000.

[1] *Hansard*, May 4.

In a country highly industrialized like Great Britain, and in large cities like Belfast and Dublin, the Bill would certainly be a boon. Employment was not always constant, and wages were low, and when sickness came there was no reserve from past savings to meet its demands. In factories the conditions were often unhealthy, the air was fetid, or the workers stood between an open door and an open window. The low wages were insufficient to provide suitable clothing and food, and the overworked frame became enfeebled and diseased, with no refuge but the hospital or the workhouse. It was calculated that in any given year more than 400,000 suffered from consumption, and these, spreading the same fatal disease to others, resulted in the death of at least 40,000. For such as these the Insurance Bill would furnish relief, giving money in illness and in disablement following disease, and furnishing medical relief which might be a salutary preventive. And there could be no doubt that the provision of maternity benefits and of sanatorium treatment were merciful aids to those who stood in great need.[1]

But there was the other side to the picture. Many would pay their weekly contributions and never get any benefits, so that while there was identity of contribution there would be inequality of benefit; and many workers asked themselves why they should be asked to pay for others. They thought that being compelled to pay was an undue restriction on their personal liberty. There was room, too, for malingering, for the idle and thriftless and lazy might shirk work and be maintained by those who toiled and earned. And there was grave dissatisfaction on the part of employers. They paid their workers an agreed wage, and often treated them well, and they disliked being loaded with fresh burdens which brought neither themselves nor their workers any relief.[2]

Outside of the large cities the Bill was not welcomed in Ireland, nor was it needed. Agricultural labourers worked under healthier conditions than those in the factories and workshops of the big cities, and sickness among the workers was therefore less;

[1] Mr. Lloyd George's speech, May 4. [2] Copy of Insurance Act.

and it did not seem a wise proceeding to burden both employers and workmen when there was not likely to be any corresponding return. The Catholic bishops condemned the Bill as unsuitable to Ireland, and so did the press. In Parliament Mr. William O'Brien was always among the opponents of the measure at every stage of its passage, and Mr. T. M. Healy, who had lately come back to Parliament, was sarcastic and severe.[1] Mr. O'Brien could not see that it would benefit anybody in Ireland but the Ancient Order of Hibernians, who would administer large sums and supply positions to many members. Mr. Healy also continued his opposition, and predicted that it would encourage grazing and discourage agriculture.

But the Irish Party were on the other side, and Mr. O'Brien's motion to have Ireland excluded from the measure, at least until 1914, was easily voted down. Mr. Redmond, indeed, got Ireland excluded from the medical benefits, which was but a poor concession, and with this and some other small amendments he remained satisfied.[2] He would not weaken the Government or endanger its life, now that the Parliament Bill had been passed and the way was ready for the early passage of a Home Rule Bill. For the same reason he voted for the Budget, which continued the extra taxes of the previous year.

He also assented to Mr. Lloyd George's motion giving members of Parliament a salary of £400 a year.[3] In former years he had declared that his followers would accept no such payment. This self-denying ordinance was not continued, and when Mr. Lloyd George praised the Irish members for their disinterestedness, the Irish members felt virtuously and patriotically proud. Now the salaries were duly accepted. The Irish members, being thus lifted above necessity, ceased to consult their constituents or to care for their wishes. Relying on their own newspapers and on their own organization to beat down opponents at elections, they felt their positions and their salaries secure, and from this period they were more autocratic and overbearing than ever, and responded less to pressure from their people at home. An Irish Party dependent

[1] *Hansard*, Oct. 25, 1911. [2] *Ibid.*, Nov. 14. [3] *Ibid.*, Aug. 10.

as of old on the subscriptions of their countrymen at home and abroad would never have flouted the strong resolution of the Catholic bishops against the Insurance Bill.[1] But a party each of which had a comfortable salary from Parliament were ready to reject any remonstrance either from pastors or from people.

The census of 1911 showed that the population had fallen still further, being now just a little under 4,400,000. Compared with the figures of 1901 the decrease was only 1·7 per cent, the smallest yet recorded for any period of ten years. But it was nevertheless serious when it was remembered that in seventy years the population had fallen by half, that the fall had not yet ceased, and that with a better system of agriculture, greater progress in industries, and a more helpful Government it might be 20,000,000. In recent years the attention of the British Parliament had been much directed towards the conditions under which Irish land was held, and the operation of the Land Purchase Acts had improved the status of the tenants. Yet emigration still continued. The new and enlarged holdings could not be divided and were given to one member of the family, while the others, with but few openings in the industrial field, were left unprovided for and had to seek their fortunes abroad.

The Irish Party, incapable of doing anything for the people, though keeping the Government in power, indulged largely in prophecies about the good things to come. If they were to be believed, the millennium had almost arrived with the passing of the Parliament Bill. This removed the last obstacle to Home Rule, and an Irish Parliament in College Green was but a matter of a short time. Meantime the Irish members, knowing that their alliance with the Liberals was unpopular with large masses in Ireland, were anxious to show their independence. They issued a manifesto early in the year congratulating King George on his accession to the throne and wishing him a long and glorious reign, but at the same time declaring that they could have no part in the celebrations connected with the coronation. To do so would be easily misconstrued into acquiescence in the present

[1] *Irish Catholic Directory*, 1911, Bishops' Resolutions.

system of government in Ireland.[1] Beyond this the Irish members did not go. They were able to do nothing to settle the strikes in Dublin, first in the timber yards and later on the railways. They did not even try to mediate between employers and employed, as popular representatives in touch with the people might have done.

The majority of the people still clung to Parliamentary methods for the redress of their grievances, but large numbers were displeased with the methods of the Irish Party. They wanted more vigorous action in Parliament, more independence of English parties, believing that such would be more productive of beneficial results. In the circumstances the Sinn Feiners were gaining ground. They demonstrated against any part in the coronation, or in the reception of the King and Queen, who visited Ireland in July; and they protested vigorously against a proposed Anglo-American alliance. And instead of placing reliance on English statesmen, or any alliance with an English party, they preached distrust of all English politicians, and in the columns of their newspaper, *Sinn Fein*, past alliances were recalled and the treachery of English political leaders was emphasized.

These articles were written by Mr. Arthur Griffith, the ablest of the Sinn Fein leaders, and indeed the founder of the whole Sinn Fein movement. Nor was there any lack of material for the purpose he had in view. In 1783 England renounced by the Treaty of Paris her claim to govern the United States of America, and the same year the British Parliament renounced England's claim to govern Ireland. This was done by the Renunciation Act which " specifically recognized the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by His Majesty and the people of that kingdom in all cases whatever, and to have all actions and suits at law or in equity which may be instituted in that kingdom decided in His Majesty's courts therein finally, and without appeal from thence, and shall be and it is hereby declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and shall, and at no time hereafter, be questioned or questionable ". The purpose of this Act was clearly defined in its title: " An Act for removing

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 293.

Robinson

GENERAL SIR HUBERT GOUGH

Topical

JAMES CAMPBELL
(LORD GLENAVY)

Elliott & Fry

RONALD McNEILL

Elliott & Fry

A. BONAR LAW

and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature, and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of His Majesty's courts in that kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged, in any of His Majesty's courts in the Kingdom of Great Britain". Words could not put it plainer that Ireland and Great Britain were two separate kingdoms, united under one king; not that Ireland was separate from the British Empire, but that she was a partner in it on equal terms with Great Britain.[1]

The claim was indeed reluctantly admitted by English Ministers, and only under pressure of stern necessity. But England was weakened by the American War, and was in no condition to have a new war on her hands, and Ireland had the new-found spirit of self-reliance and determination engendered by the events of 1782; and she had the guns of the Volunteers. Within a few years Mr. Pitt was plotting to take back what had been granted. To have Ireland a kingdom coequal in power with Great Britain would not do, and Orde's resolutions of 1785 were intended to make Ireland a subordinate kingdom. For if Ireland were to give a contribution to the British navy fixed by Great Britain and to be expended by Great Britain, it was only a tributary kingdom.

Orde's new proposals were worse. These provided that Ireland should not trade with any country where its trading might conflict with the interests of the British East India Company; and further that whatever navigation laws were passed by the British Parliament should be accepted and adopted by Ireland. An independent Parliament having the raising and the spending of its own taxes, and empowered to make its own commercial treaties, could not accept such proposals as these, and Orde's propositions, when embodied in a Bill and introduced into the Irish Parliament, were rejected with scorn.[2] Nor would the Irish Parliament admit that in the case of a regency in 1789 it must necessarily agree with the regency appointed by England.

[1] Griffith, *The Resurrection of Hungary*, pp. 168–9.
[2] *Irish Parliamentary Debates.*

Anxious to wean Ireland from French revolutionary principles, Pitt granted concessions in 1792, and much larger concessions in 1793. This emancipation was to be completed in 1795, when he sent over Lord Fitzwilliam as Viceroy. For there was to be Catholic emancipation and Parliamentary reform. Rotten boroughs and placemen representatives were to be replaced by constituencies where the people had votes, and by representatives who had some respect for their own character and for the wishes of the people. But the Irish were tricked. Fitzwilliam gave place to Camden, who came with instructions from Pitt to stir up sectarian bitterness, to turn the United Irishmen from open advocacy of reform into a secret society, to urge the Catholic against the Orangeman and the Orangeman against the Catholic. Being a man without character or honour, he regarded such work as congenial, and he did his work well.

The next few years saw darker deeds. Pitt was determined to destroy the Irish Parliament, and as a prelude to a legislative union there must be an insurrection, and in 1796 and in the following year the whole resources of the Irish Government were utilized for this purpose. The renegade Irishman Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare and Lord Chancellor, intimidated and corrupted in Parliament, until the Parliament became the apologist of oppression rather than the defender of liberty. The Ulster yeomen, recruited from the ranks of the Orangemen, and acting with Welsh and German mercenaries, were let loose on the unarmed people. Martial law, without any excuse of crime or disorder, was proclaimed. Men were thrown into prison without trial or accusation; men were shot down on the roadside; all meetings were declared illegal; the press was gagged; men were flogged until they died, and men were half-hanged; women were insulted and outraged; and when a gallant Scottish soldier, General Abercromby, came to Ireland to replace Lord Carhampton as Commander-in-Chief, he had to report that the soldiers were undisciplined and licentious, guilty of every crime that could be committed by Cossack or Calmuck, and dangerous to everyone but the enemy. Such outrages at last goaded the people to rebellion, and when the Rebellion of 1798

was quenched in blood, the Union was passed and the Irish Parliament was extinguished.

Nor was all this the end of Pitt's treachery to Ireland. To purchase Catholic support for his Union project, support without which the Union could never have been carried, he promised Catholic emancipation as one of the first measures of the United Parliament at Westminster. He found the King resolutely opposed, and resigned office in disgust, as he told his Irish Catholic friends. But he soon after returned to office, and with a promise to the old bigoted King that he would never again even mention Catholic emancipation. Nor did he. He died in 1805, leaving the Irish Catholic still in chains. Nor was it for thirty years that emancipation came, and then only because of the dread of civil war if concession was further delayed. Pitt was a Tory, and so were Wellington and Peel, but the Irish have been equally deceived by the Whigs, and indeed they have never trusted them but they have been deceived. The Liberal Lord Grey and his Chief-Secretary, Stanley, had no better gift for Ireland than the savage Coercion Act of 1833; and they so infuriated O'Connell that he described them and their supporters as " the base, brutal, and bloody whigs ".[1] Lord Melbourne and the Liberals were kept in office for six years. The arrangement under which the two parties acted was called the Lichfield House Compact, though Lord John Russell preferred to call it " an alliance on honourable terms of mutual co-operation ". But let it be an alliance or a compact, it was barren of much result for Ireland. The Liberals got power, and the emoluments and honours connected with power, while Ireland got nothing but the Tithe Commutation Act and a wretched measure of municipal reform. It was a Liberal Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, who declared that tenant right was landlord wrong. And a later day saw Mr. Forster, the Liberal, or more correctly the Radical Chief-Secretary, rule Ireland with savage coercion, in the spirit of Fitzgibbon and Castlereagh.

The Irish members of 1911 would have done well if they had studied modern Irish history and learned how and by whom Irish

[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i, 331.

parties and Irish leaders had been sold. Nor could they have more profitably employed their leisure hours—and they had much leisure on their hands—than in reading over the pages of the little Dublin weekly newspaper in which Mr. Griffith told, with knowledge that was accurate and full, and in language that was vigorous and clear, the story of Ireland in the days of Pitt and in the days of his successors. But these Irish members held Mr. Griffith and his opinions in utter abhorrence. They preferred to read nothing, to remain ignorant of the past and heedless of what the future would bring, content with spending their time in London, with a comfortable salary of £400 a year.

Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were much more to blame than their less informed colleagues. They were educated men with a good knowledge of modern Irish history. They were fully aware of the infamies of 1798 and of the means by which the Union was carried. They knew that O'Connell had good reason for saying that the Whigs were brutal and bloody. They had passed through the Forster regime, and had suffered under that regime themselves. They had seen the double dealing and insincerity of Lord Rosebery, whose party they had kept in office by their votes. Yet they ignored all these lessons of the past, and were as confiding as if an Irish Party or an Irish leader had never been betrayed. Mr. Asquith was as much at their mercy as Melbourne had been at the mercy of O'Connell, and Mr. Asquith's record on Home Rule was not better than Melbourne's on Irish reform. Might not the parallel be continued, and the alliance of the twentieth century be as barren of legislative results as that of the nineteenth century? But Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon refused to learn from the past. They deliberately closed their eyes to its lessons. They talked as if there could not be any further betrayal, and sought to elevate their own faith in Mr. Asquith to the position of an article of the national creed.

The *Freeman's Journal*, true to its record, treated the utterances of Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon as little less than inspired wisdom. Whoever differed from them was a factionist, whoever adversely criticized them was a traitor. On all such persons

Mr. Dillon himself was specially severe. He was now associated with British Cabinet Ministers, and in familiar intercourse with Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he scathingly rebuked those who presumed to question his political prescience. Mr. Redmond was less intolerant with those who differed with him. But, apparently, he had no misgivings. At the close of the year he was in consultation with members of the Cabinet, and, it was thought, was helping them to draft a Home Rule Bill. He was already drawing cheques upon the future, and as the year approached its end he made several speeches in England on Home Rule, making in advance a sort of triumphal progress.[1]

But the more thoughtful among Irish Nationalists were not so certain that victory was at hand. If Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were making speeches for Home Rule, Sir Edward Carson was making speeches against Home Rule in any shape or form, and Sir Edward Carson was a much abler man than either and much more determined, and he had powerful influences behind him. Among the masses in Great Britain there was little enthusiasm for Home Rule; there was less in the House of Commons, and among the majority of Ministers, including Mr. Asquith, there was none at all. For six years the Irish had voted with the Liberals, protesting their independence, and yet as responsive to the crack of the Liberal whips as if they sat for Liberal constituencies. They could show nothing for their slavish subserviency except the Universities Act, which owed its passage less to Liberal zeal than to Unionist goodwill. Nor would the Parliament Act, of which they boasted so much, have any effect than delay Home Rule for a further period of two years. Men began to ask themselves, were these the chiefs to lead Ireland to victory, if they had done so little, when they could have done so much? It was at least possible that for a further term of years they might continue to plough the sands.

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 225.

CHAPTER VII

The Home Rule Bill

There was much impatience in Ireland at the opening of the year 1912. To appeal to the sense of justice of English politicians the people knew was futile when any Irish question was concerned. But, surely, if the Irish members of Parliament constantly supported a British party and kept that party in office, they might expect something substantial in return. Empty promises were not sufficient, and yet nothing was done for Ireland in 1910, nothing in the following year, in spite of the fact that the Liberal Government owed its very existence to the Irish vote in Parliament.

Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon made many speeches and promised many things, including Home Rule, at no distant date. But the years passed, and the promised boons faded like the fabled island in the Atlantic. It was felt in Ireland that a manlier attitude on the part of the Irish leaders would have consorted better with national ideals, and, in addition, would have produced better results. For an Irish Party in Parliament the best policy was that of independent opposition, no entangling alliances, a readiness to be friendly with the Tories if only concessions could be got from them, and an equal readiness to oppose the Liberals if the Liberals were unwilling to concede. Yet in these years, though there were professions of independence, repeated denials of any alliance, all the world could see that the Irish Party had degenerated into a mere wing of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Redmond defended his attitude by saying that everything was subsidiary to Home Rule, and on these grounds he voted for the Budget and for the Insurance Bill, and he agreed to the postponement of the question of Irish self-government until the

abolition of the Lords' veto had taken legislative form. When this was done, Mr. Redmond was jubilant, and in 1911 he made many speeches promising that at last Home Rule was near.

By Home Rule Mr. Redmond meant an Irish Parliament sitting in Ireland, elected by Irishmen and having authority over purely Irish affairs, and with an executive dependent on it. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, judging by his speeches in Canada, wanted no more for Ireland than he did for Scotland and Wales, thus making Ireland a unit in a federal system of local government, and with powers much inferior to what a national assembly ought to have. Mr. Dillon wanted Gladstonian Home Rule, which would confer at least as much power as the schemes of 1886 or 1893. These gentlemen did not think it worth their while to consult their colleagues in Parliament, who were, apparently, quite willing to let their leaders think for them. Nor was any counsel taken with informed opinion outside the ranks of the Irish Party, though this was a question in which every Irishman was personally interested. Home Rule might mean much or little, and it was not likely that Mr. Asquith would be generous. He would go no further than the Councils Bill, as long as he was independent of the Irish vote. Even dependent on the Irish vote, he procrastinated and was emphatic in declaring that no Home Rule could be given which did not safeguard the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament.

Dealing with such a man and with his colleagues, the Irish leaders should have walked warily, lest the country might be confronted with another betrayal. They should have known what they wanted and what the country wanted, and should have shown a determination to get this from the Liberals as the price of their continued support. But they took no counsel with their own people, and showed no such determination in putting forth the national demands. They took their own course, and after many meetings between Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor on the one side, and Mr. Asquith and his colleagues on the other, shape was given to the Liberal Home Rule Bill, which was introduced in the House of Commons in April, 1912.

It was a complicated Bill. An Irish Parliament was conferred, but it was a poor assembly for a nation to get; its limitations were many and grievous, its financial provisions specially unsatisfactory. The supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was emphatically, even tediously, set out. Unlike Grattan's Parliament, the new Irish Parliament was to be subordinate, not co-ordinate. The whole field of Irish legislation was still open to the British Parliament; and if both assemblies legislated on the same subject and any conflict arose, the enactment of the Irish Parliament should always give way.

There were a large number of subjects which for the Irish Parliament were forbidden ground. It could not, for instance, interfere with the Crown, or the succession to the Crown, or a regency, or even with the Lord-Lieutenant as an Imperial officer. It could not make peace or war, and had no authority over the army or navy, or territorial force, or any military matter, or the defence of the realm. It could enter into no treaty with foreign states or with the British dominions, nor could it touch such subjects as dignities or titles of honour, or treason, treason-felony, alienage nationalization, coinage, legal tender, weights and measures, designs, trade-marks, copyright or patent right. Outside the limits of its powers also were "trade with any place out of Ireland", quarantine, navigation, lighthouses, buoys and beacons.

This was a formidable list of excluded subjects. But there was worse. The Irish Parliament would have no power over the Constabulary for six years, nor over the collection of taxes for an indefinite period, nor over the Post Office Savings Bank, Trustee Savings Banks, and Friendly Societies. Public loans made in Ireland before the passing of the Act were also excluded from its control, as were all matters connected with Land Purchase, Old Age Pensions, the National Museum, and Labour Exchange. These matters might at any time be handed over by the British Parliament, but they might not; they might be indefinitely excluded from the control of the Irish Parliament. This latter body was also precluded from making any law so as, directly or indirectly, to establish or endow any religion, or prohibit the free

exercise thereof, or give any preference, privilege, or advantage, or impose any disability or disadvantage, on account of religious belief, or religious or ecclesiastical status, or make any religious belief or religious ceremony a condition of the validity of any marriage.[1]

With some of these restrictions little fault could be found. As long as Ireland and Great Britain were united and there was no question of separation, the King of Great Britain would be King of Ireland as a matter of course. Nor did Ireland want to interfere with the army or navy, or with peace or war. But she might surely have her own territorial force and her own police. She ought to be free in matters of trade and navigation and quarantine, coinage and legal tender; and there was no reason why such matters as trade-marks, designs, and weights and measures should be made excluded subjects. And if the British Parliament did not continue and complete the work of land purchase within a certain limit of time, the matter should be handed over to the Irish Parliament. Mr. Gladstone had such a provision in his Bill of 1893, and such a provision ought to have been put into Mr. Asquith's Bill of 1912.

But the financial provisions were the fatal blot on the Bill. In the preceding year, in preparation for a Home Rule Bill, the Government had appointed a committee of experts, presided over by Sir Henry Primrose, to inquire into the financial relations of Ireland with other parts of the United Kingdom, to distinguish between Irish local and Imperial expenditure in Ireland, and to consider, if an Irish Parliament and an Irish executive were set up, how the revenue required to meet the necessary expenditure should be provided. In due time the Committee reported that:

1. "The true revenue of Ireland could not be ascertained, but that it was less by a million pounds than the expenditure."
2. "That any settlement should leave as little as possible for future revision."
3. "That the future Irish contribution to Imperial expenditure could not be determined."

[1] Clause 3.

4. "That the Irish Government should get full power over the raising of revenue as well as over expenditure in Ireland, subject to reservations as to imposing tariffs and with provisional arrangements to balance the Irish Budget."[1]

Many well-informed persons denied that there was a deficit in Ireland, as between revenue and expenditure, and the findings of the Primrose Committee were quite consistent with the view. For the Committee expressed its inability to ascertain the true revenue of Ireland, and at the worst did not put the deficit at more than one million, while the Government put it at a million and a half, and sometimes as high as two millions. There could be no deficit but for the old age pensions and the wasteful system of Dublin Castle government, the most wasteful in Europe. And even had there been a deficit, some assistance was surely due from the Imperial Exchequer, seeing that Ireland had paid in overtaxation in a century the enormous sum of £300,000,000.

Yet in spite of these facts, such was the grudging character of the Home Rule Bill that the Irish Parliament was not given fiscal autonomy, and the wretched powers of taxation given were so hedged round that they were of little use. It could not levy customs duty or excise; it could not tax any article already taxed by the Imperial authority. It could only add to the Imperial customs duty a duty of 10 per cent. It could increase indefinitely the excise duty on beer and spirits, but this power was useless because the customs duties could not be correspondingly increased; for if English beer and spirits could not be heavily taxed and imported, Irish beer and spirits could not, as the consumption of the home article would necessarily decline. The Irish Parliament could not even vary the stamp duty, which should be the same on both sides of the Irish Sea. To find things other than those already taxed by the British Parliament would not be easy. But if a tax was imposed, for instance, on bicycles or horses the resulting revenue would be small. Outside of these narrow limits the British Parliament imposed the taxes, and all taxes were collected by British officials and paid into the British Exchequer. Even a County Council can

[1] *Annual Register*, 1912, p. 88.

tax and spend, and a District Council can strike its rates, but the Irish Parliament could not go so far.

From the proceeds of Irish taxation, whether Imperial or local, paid into the British Exchequer an annual sum was given to the Irish Exchequer to meet the expenses of Irish government. These Government departments dealt with education, Post Office, administration of the land courts, and local government. These were the transferred services, and the sum paid out of the Imperial Exchequer to meet their administration was called the Transferred Sum. It would be supplemented to meet the assumed deficit and balance receipts and expenditure by a free grant from the Imperial Exchequer of £500,000, diminishing by £50,000 a year until £200,000 was reached, at which figure it would remain until a new financial arrangement was made. This would disappear when receipts and expenditure were equalized.

The amount of the Transferred Sum to meet the expenses of the transferred services was put at £6,000,000. These services still kept in Imperial hands old age pensions, National Insurance, land purchase, and the Constabulary, and were calculated at about £5,000,000. If they ceased to be reserved services and became transferred to the Irish Government, the annual cost of their administration was added to the Transferred Sum. But, on the other hand, pending any such change, and with the Transferred Sum at about £6,000,000, it was liable to deduction at the expense of available Irish revenue. For if there were defaulters among land purchase annuitants, the loss fell on the Transferred Sum. Further, if any addition was put on to the Imperial tax, and lessened consumption was the result, the Transferred Sum again suffered a deduction.

To adjust the relations between the Imperial and Irish Exchequers a body was set up called the Joint Exchequer Board. It would consist of five members, two appointed by the Irish Government, two by the British Government, and a chairman appointed by the King, which meant appointed by the British Government in power, thus giving the British authorities a permanent majority on the Board. Its duties were far-reaching. It

should determine the cost of the services transferred at the passing of the Act. It should estimate the proceeds of any purely Irish tax. It would have to determine whether a new Irish tax was substantially the same as an existing Imperial tax; what reduction might be made in Irish revenue, and also of the Transferred Sum. It must decide when the Irish Parliament had added 10 per cent to an existing Imperial customs duty, and what was the amount of the Transferred Sum to accompany the transfer of reserved services to the Irish Parliament.

Nothing could be worse than these financial provisions. They were grudging and inadequate and involved, and sure to cause friction. They left the Irish Parliament in the dependent position that it could neither levy nor collect the revenue for the purposes of government. It could not protect Irish industries by imposing a protective tariff; it could not grant any bounty to its own struggling industries. These financial provisions perpetuated the injustice of the past in regard to overtaxation, and in every dispute between the members of the Joint Exchequer Board the British majority would see to it that it was Ireland and not Great Britain that suffered. Ireland was mainly an agricultural country, while Great Britain was mainly industrial, and the same fiscal system did not suit both, and yet fiscal unity was maintained, though uniformity of taxation, as Mr. Lough reminded the House of Commons, did not produce equality of burden.[1] With a cast-iron fiscal system for the British Isles, Ireland would be unable to impose financial burdens suitable to her separate and changing needs. Nor could she, with the paltry sum doled out to her, borrow sufficiently to undertake any works of great national importance, such as the drainage of rivers, the deepening of harbours, the purchase of railways, or the development of her latent mineral resources.

Mr. William O'Brien attacked the finance of the Bill, and, though very anxious for a final settlement between Great Britain and Ireland, declared that such a financial system could not be a final settlement. Mr. T. M. Healy declared that the finance of

[1] *Hansard*, April 16, 1912.

the Bill was putrid. Lord MacDonnell used different language, but was emphatic in his condemnation. Finally, the representatives of the Irish County Councils, the General Council of Irish County Councils, described the finance of the Bill as essentially bad, the keynote of which was increased taxation of Ireland.[1]

The other clauses of the Home Rule Bill were not so objectionable as those relating to finance, though many of them called for amendment. The Irish Ministry would be the executive committee of the Privy Council. The Lord-Lieutenant acted on their advice, though in his capacity as an Imperial officer he acted on the advice of the British Ministry. As representing the King, he summoned, prorogued, and dissolved the Irish Parliament, and gave the Royal assent to Bills, or he refused this assent. He held office for six years, and was not to be disqualified for his office by any religious belief, so that he might be a Catholic, unlike his predecessors at the Castle.

The Irish Parliament would consist of two houses, a Senate and a House of Commons. Senators would hold office for eight years, and would be all nominated. The House of Commons would number 164 members, elected by the same electors and in the same way as the Irish members sent to Westminster. This excluded clergymen and was, no doubt, welcome to Mr. Redmond, who had already disqualified clergymen from sitting on the County or District Councils. In the apportionment of these members the boroughs got 30, the counties 128, and the Universities 2. The only University having any members was Trinity College, no member being allotted either to the National University or to the Queen's University, Belfast. As between the two largest boroughs, Dublin got 11 and Belfast 14 members. In the counties also Ulster was well treated, 43 going to the province as against 30 for Leinster. This arrangement would last for three years, after which " The Irish Parliament may alter as respects the House of Commons, the qualifications of the electors, the mode of election, the constituencies, and the distribution of the members of the House of Commons ".[2]

[1] *Annual Register*, 1912, p. 87. [2] Clause 9.

As in the British Parliament, money Bills would originate in the House of Commons, and could not be rejected or altered by the Senate. In the case of either Bills, should a disagreement arise between the two Houses, both Houses would sit together, and then, if in joint session a majority passed the Bill, it became law.

As to the qualifications of members, any peer, whether of Ireland or of the United Kingdom, could sit in either House, if elected to the House of Commons, or if nominated to the Senate. But an Irish Minister might speak in both Houses though he could only vote in the House of which he was a member.

Provision was also made to continue the Irish representation at Westminster; but the number would be reduced to 42, of whom 8 would be borough and 34 county members, 11 of the latter being from Ulster. These would vote on all questions in the Imperial Parliament, and were sent there chiefly because the Imperial Parliament continued to reserve to itself such extensive powers of taxation and legislation where Ireland was concerned.

Judges of the superior and county courts would be appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant, and would hold office as previously, being removable only by an address both from the House of Commons and the Senate. Henceforth there would be no appeal to the British House of Lords, but there might be an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council, as there might be also in certain cases where the validity of an Irish Act of Parliament was challenged.[1]

Ample arrangements were made to meet the case of existing judges, as well as of civil servants. Similar provisions were made in favour of officers and men of the Metropolitan Police and of the Royal Irish Constabulary, but with this difference, that the Metropolitan Police were at once placed under the Irish Parliament, while the Royal Irish Constabulary was not so transferred until after the lapse of six years.

There was a special clause dealing with concurrent legislation, and this provided that " The Irish Parliament shall not have power to repeal or alter any provision of this Act, or of any Act passed

[1] Clause 41.

by the Parliament of the United Kingdom after the passing of this Act and extending to Ireland, although that provision deals with a matter with respect to which the Irish Parliament has power to make laws. And the Act of the Irish Parliament shall be read subject to the Act in the Parliament of the United Kindgom, and so far as it is repugnant to that Act, but no further, it shall be void." Even after an Irish Parliament was set up the British Parliament would continue to legislate for Ireland, and might nullify any Act of the Irish Parliament.

This was the Home Rule Bill, involved, intricate, and complicated, but especially involved and complicated in its financial clauses. Indeed the provisions with regard to customs duties levied in Ireland and in Great Britain, and the adjustments necessary when goods passed from one country to another, and when perhaps the customs duties varied, were especially perplexing. Many members of Parliament were bewildered, and only a few men with expert knowledge, such as Mr. Samuel, really understood these provisions, or could explain them satisfactorily. Mr. Redmond was of course competent to deal with these clauses, as they had been hammered out in consultation with him; and at a National Convention held in Dublin, April 23, 1912, he undertook to explain the whole Home Rule Bill.

Earlier in the year he said that Ireland wanted Home Rule because of her nationality. She was a nation, and was not satisfied to occupy the position of a province, even of a great Empire. But in the debate on the first reading of the Home Rule Bill he claimed that he had always been a federalist, and that this Home Rule Bill was the forerunner of federation. He therefore looked to a time when Scotland and Wales would have Parliaments, and England, no doubt, would be divided up into sections, each having a Parliament. But if Ireland was put in no higher position than this it would be a poor position for a nation. In the same speech Mr. Redmond declared that the Home Rule Bill was " a great Bill and we welcome it ". This was the keynote of his speech at the Convention. The Bill was the greatest and most satisfactory measure of Home Rule ever offered, greater than either of Mr. Gladstone's

Bills. It abolished for ever the hated Castle system of government, and set up an executive responsible to the Irish Parliament, and therefore checked and controlled by public opinion. Mr. Redmond thought it only fair that taxation should be reserved to the Imperial Parliament so long as the Irish Government was financed from Imperial sources. Nor had he any objection to have old age pensions reserved, though the Irish people had not asked for such pensions, and the Irish Parliament would probably prefer to provide in a different and better way for the aged poor. He was willing also to have the Insurance Act administered by the Imperial authority.

In spite of all the faults found with the financial clauses, Mr. Redmond expressed his satisfaction with them. The financial scheme, he said, was good, much better than the arrangements under Mr. Gladstone's Bill. For a nation he could see no incongruity in its being unable to levy or collect taxes, none in having an Exchequer which had to beg from the Imperial Exchequer the current expenses of its government, out of taxes paid by the Irish people themselves. Mr. Redmond made much of the fact that the Irish Parliament got complete control of the excise on beer and spirits, having the power to reduce or raise or abolish them. But if it reduced or abolished them, where would the expenses of the Irish Government come from, which should be raised in Ireland and paid into the Imperial Exchequer? And if the excise on beer and spirits was unduly raised, it would only result in having beer and spirits imported from Great Britain and in destroying an Irish industry. Mr. Redmond also told his audience that the Irish Parliament got the Post Office and not the Savings Bank, omitting to add that the Post Office was not paying its way.

He told the Convention that in six years the Royal Irish Constabulary would pass under the Irish Government, and that " then the cost of the service will continue to be paid from Imperial sources, and we will benefit by any economies we may make ". But here again he was not candid, for the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary was not met from Imperial sources, but was simply the part produce of Irish taxes collected in Ireland and paid into

the Imperial Exchequer, out of which it would come as part of the Transferred Sum. Nor had Mr. Redmond any objection to the degrading arrangement by which the Irish Parliament, and the Executive dependent on it, would not have a policeman at its service for the space of six years. Equally degrading was the arrangement under which Ireland was not allowed to collect her taxes, or appoint or dismiss a tax collector.

It is true that Mr. Redmond was ready to prophesy a better future, when in a very few years the revenue of Ireland would equal the expenditure, and the subsidy from the Imperial Exchequer would disappear. Then the reserved services would be handed over to the Irish Parliament, the financial relations between the two countries would be readjusted, and taxes would be in the hands of the Irish Government. But he overlooked the Joint Exchequer Board, with its majority looking only to Imperial interests, and he overlooked the British Parliament, which had long maintained the overtaxation of Ireland, and would not be likely to lighten the financial burdens of Ireland at the expense of Great Britain.

As Mr. Redmond had been consulted in the drafting of the Home Rule Bill, and was therefore partly responsible for its provisions, it was hardly likely that he would have dwelt on its defects. The fact was that in these negotiations neither he nor Mr. Dillon was a match for the British financial experts, nor sufficiently distrustful of men like Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George. His mistake was that he had not called to his assistance Irishmen who knew more about financial matters than he did, and who were less confiding where English politicians were concerned. He was conscious of this himself and impatient of criticism. He thought he deserved immortal honour because he had got an Irish Parliament, no matter how unworthy it was of the name. The Irish leaders, he said, must get a free hand in policy and tactics, and the Convention passed the following resolution, which was proposed by Mr. Redmond himself:

"That we welcome the Government of Ireland Bill as an honest attempt to settle the long and disastrous quarrel between

the British and Irish nations; and this National Convention of the Irish people decides to accept the Bill in the spirit in which it is offered, and we hereby declare our solemn conviction that the passage of the Bill will bind the people of Ireland to the people of Great Britain by a union infinitely closer than that which now exists, and by so doing add immeasurably to the strength of the Empire."

The habit, so common in Ireland, of yielding obedience to the political leaders for the time being, and of accepting what they say without criticism, saved Mr. Redmond and his colleagues from any inconvenient fault-finding about the defects of the Home Rule Bill. The *Freeman's Journal*, always careful to look to party rather than to national interests, lauded the measure to the skies and the Convention for the resolution it passed. The local party organs throughout the country followed obediently where the *Freeman* led. Branches of the United League and of the Ancient Order of Hibernians were equally enthusiastic, as were so many of the local councils manned by supporters of the Irish Party. Finally, the members of the party, taking their cue from Mr. Redmond, pointed out the merits of the Bill, but were silent as to its defects. The people had indeed waited long, and it was thought right to show that their patience had been rewarded, that they had not waited in vain. It was a mischievous and unpatriotic attitude; for as the Bill was so good it would not require serious amendment in its passage through Parliament.

But the voice of criticism was not silent, either in Parliament or outside. The *Daily Independent*, the most widely read newspaper in Ireland, had no hesitation in condemning the financial clauses and calling for their serious amendment. The All-for-Ireland Party in Parliament, though small, had such brilliant men as Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. T. M. Healy, and Mr. Maurice Healy, and were not sparing in their objections, and as they failed to have their amendments carried they had no option but to declare that the Home Rule Bill, as it passed the House of Commons, was not, and could not be, a final settlement of the Irish question.

The attitude of the Unionists was one of uncompromising

opposition. They would have no Home Rule Bill. Had Mr. Asquith's Bill been even worse than it was, this opposition would have been no more. Indeed, if Home Rule were to be given at all, there were Unionists, and Irish Unionists, who would have preferred a complete measure rather than the truncated and grudging measure that was offered.

Sir Edward Carson was the leader of this opposition. Day after day, from the first introduction of the Home Rule Bill until its third reading in January, 1913, he watched its progress. Vehement, argumentative, and unscrupulous, he stopped at nothing, appealing to racial and religious passions, to the interests of the Empire, to the interests of Ulster, which meant, above all, the interests of Belfast. A keen politician, he seized every weapon presented to him in the course of the debates. A great lawyer, he was quick to see the defects of the Bill and to emphasize them; and when arguments failed he freely indulged in threats of civil war. North-East Ulster, he declared, would not submit to a Dublin Parliament, would not be coerced, nor driven out of the Empire. The industry and thrift of Belfast would not be taxed to support the thriftlessness and extravagance of the rest of Ireland. It was an extraordinary claim he made, the claim that Belfast and a small surrounding district should impose a veto on the rest of Ireland.

For the Bill itself, as well as for its authors, he had nothing but ridicule and scorn. He described its provisions as comic, fantastic, ridiculous, such as were never heard of before, with its sham safeguards, and a British and an Irish Parliament legislating on the same subject-matter, " the most impossible system in the world ".[1] Many of the Ulster Unionists professed to believe that their religion would be in danger. But Sir Edward Carson did not share this belief, for he said: " I give my Irish Catholic fellow-countrymen who would be inclined in any way, or from any motive, to interfere with their fellow-countrymen on account of religion, credit that it would not be by legislation ".

His Ulster Unionist friends were more reckless, and no charge was too foul to make against their Nationalist fellow-countrymen,

[1] *Hansard* Oct. 15, 1912.

and no prophecy too absurd as to what would happen in Ireland under Home Rule. Mr. Ronald MacNeill's objections were: That the Irish Parliament would enact objectionable marriage laws; it would set up ecclesiastical courts; it would pass factory and company laws which would be specially aimed at Belfast industries. Further, both he and Mr. Gordon feared Mr. Devlin's Hibernians, Mr. Gordon thinking, and with some plausibility, that if these Hibernians had tyrannized over some of their fellow-Nationalists, they would not be likely to spare the Ulster Protestants.[1]

The Carsonite attitude throughout was that the Bill could not be amended so as to be made acceptable to Belfast. It was not therefore because he wanted the Bill that Sir Edward Carson moved in Committee to exclude all Ulster from its provisions.[2] Nor was it because he wanted Home Rule that he supported Mr. Agar-Robertes's amendment to exclude the four Orange counties of Ulster. It was because he knew that these amendments could not be accepted by the Irish Nationalists, and that the acceptance of such amendments by the Government would kill the Bill. For he bluntly declared that the acceptance of such amendments would not in the least mitigate his opposition to Home Rule. The Ulster Unionists, such as Messrs. Craig and Moore and others, were even more vehement and more menacing than their leader, and always concluded their speeches by declaring that they would have no Home Rule and would resist it by force. Loyal to the Empire these Orange Unionists professed to be, but not loyal to an Act of the British Parliament.

Their opposition would, of course, have been futile had they not been supported by the whole strength of the Unionist Party. The new Unionist leader, Mr. Bonar Law, was as bitter and as unscrupulous as Sir Edward Carson, and equally ready to declare that an Act setting up a Parliament in Ireland would be resisted by force; an extraordinary attitude for the chief of a great constitutional party. Mr. Austen Chamberlain was not so violent, but he was equally earnest in his opposition. Mr. Butcher put

[1] Speeches of Messrs. MacNeill and Gordon on the third reading.
[2] *Hansard*, Jan. 1, 1913.

the Unionist case well: "You are", he said, "setting up a constitution for Ireland the like of which has never been seen in the history of the world: a mongrel government, half Dominion self-government and half provincial state government. You give the Irish Parliament great powers, and at the same time you are fencing round that Irish Parliament with wire entanglements of constitutional and financial limitations." [1]

Mr. Balfour, who had recently retired from the leadership of the Unionist Party, was back again in Parliament, and in these debates was the most formidable opponent of Home Rule. Like many others, he indulged in prophecy, but he indulged little in threats, and he ridiculed the idea of national recognition for Ireland in the Home Rule Bill. For he pointed out that, under its provisions, Ireland could have no army or navy, no territorial force, not even police. It could not settle its own form of government, its own foreign or fiscal policy, nor its land question, and could not safeguard its trade or industrial interests. Therefore he considered that the Irish National members were being duped by their Liberal allies.[2]

It could not be denied that this was true. For if the Liberals had been in earnest, the opposition of the Unionists could have been overcome. Had they been anxious to do justice to Ireland, there would have been no additional burdens imposed by the Budget of 1909. Had they been ready to give real self-government, there would have been no such offer as the Councils Bill of 1907. Had they been real democrats, they would have passed a real and not a sham Veto Bill, which was dilatory, cumbersome, and ineffective. Had they felt that the Irish question was urgent, they would not have delayed their Home Rule Bill until 1912. Nor would they have offered such a Bill in satisfaction of a national demand, a measure bristling with checks and safeguards and restrictions, which contained suspicion and distrust of Ireland almost in every clause.

There were Liberals both in Parliament and outside who were genuine friends of Ireland, men moved by justice rather than

[1] *Hansard*, May 6, 1912. [2] Speech on the third reading.

expediency. But Mr. Asquith and his Ministers were not among them. There was no Home Rule Bill until after 1910, nor would there have been one in 1912 if the Liberals could have retained office without the Irish vote. Mr. Asquith was quite aware that a full measure of Home Rule could be passed as easily as the measure he offered. But he was reluctant to give a full measure, and was only too ready to whittle down the measure offered if he could buy off Unionist opposition and retain office. Mr. Churchill, indeed, admitted that the Bill fell short in some respects of Gladstone's proposals, and wished to know if Unionist Ulster wanted separate treatment. The Bill was to be the forerunner of a general scheme of devolution, and Ireland, cut up into two divisions, would have the same status as Lancashire or Yorkshire.[1] Mr. Samuel, the Postmaster-General, was a great master of financial questions and of lucid statement, but instead of amplifying the powers given, he curtailed them by accepting an amendment to clause 15, which took away the power to reduce the customs duties. The Law Officers, Sir R. Isaacs and Sir John Simon, explained the legal position, but they could not conceal the fact that the Irish Parliament would be thwarted and hampered at every turn. Finally, Mr. Churchill, with the instincts of a half-converted Tory, was very solicitous about Orange Ulster, and declared that " There is no doubt that Ulster can make this Bill impossible ", a plain intimation to Sir Edward Carson to continue his unreasoning opposition.[2]

Not less fatal than the insincerity and treachery of the Liberals was the weakness and timidity of Mr. Redmond. It was right that he should be conciliatory, but not well that he should be yielding. He was the guardian of the nation's honour, the official defender of its rights, and should have shown strength when the nation's rights were imperilled. It was here that he failed. A strong man would have refused even to discuss the Councils Bill of 1907, and would have led his party into the Opposition lobby against the Budget of 1909. If he had done this, the Home Rule Bill would have been introduced long before 1912, and it would

[1] *Hansard*, April 30, 1912. [2] *Hansard*, Jan. 15, 1913.

have been a real and not a sham measure of Home Rule. Nor was this all. The man who boasted on American platforms that he would make the Liberals " toe the line " was, during the Home Rule debates, ever ready to yield. He praised the financial clauses of the Bill, and he assented to Government amendments which made these clauses worse. He piteously pleaded with the Ulster Orangemen to put in the Bill any safeguards they wished for, and said that in order to be friendly with them there was no limit to which he would not go.[1] And he knew well that the Orangemen, pampered by privilege, wanted only to safeguard ascendancy. They disdained to be put on an equality with the rest of Ireland. Mr. Redmond's protestations of friendship disbelieved, his safeguards derided, his desire for unity and goodwill laughed to scorn, he found that he yielded in vain. He had got no gratitude. He had humbled himself and had not been exalted, and when the Home Rule Bill left the House of Commons it was a worse Bill than at its second reading.

Mr. William O'Brien was pathetically anxious for peace, for an end to the ancient quarrel between England and Ireland, and yet he had to declare solemnly in his speech on the third reading that the Bill had been mutilated, and that such a Bill could not be a final settlement of the Irish question.

[1] *Hansard.*

CHAPTER VIII

The Veto of Belfast

The fate of Mr. Asquith's Home Rule Bill was not in doubt when it reached the House of Lords. A Liberal measure urgently demanded by the masses in Great Britain, especially if violence were threatened and really feared, would probably pass at once, in spite of the Parliament Act. But an Irish Bill, hated by the Belfast Orangemen, hated also by English Conservatives, and not loved by the Liberals themselves, had no chance. If the measure could not be irrevocably defeated, the Parliament Act could be used to delay it to the fullest extent. Hence, without any scruple or compunction, the Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill on its second reading, and by the overwhelming majority of 326 to 69.

This happened in January, 1913, and the following June the same Bill, which had been earlier in the year introduced and had passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 101, and its third reading by more than 90 of a majority, was again rejected in the Lords. The debates were merely a repetition of those of the preceding year. Mr. Balfour was confident that there would be civil war in Ulster if the Bill ever became law. Mr. William O'Brien again pleaded for a settlement by consent. But Sir Edward Carson wanted no conference, no compromise, and no settlement. Ulster would have no Home Rule. She would resist any such measure by force, and he had behind him the whole Unionist Party. "You may jeer at us, but we will go on and eventually defeat you." As usual Mr. Redmond was meek and deprecating, ready to go any length to conciliate Ulster, ready to give her any safeguards she desired, and this in spite of the

repeated declaration of Sir Edward Carson that he wanted no conciliation and would value no safeguards given.

When the Home Rule Bill passed from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, it there met its doom. Again the majority for rejection was decisive, only 64 for the second reading and 302 against it. Nothing could be done by its friends but to wait till 1914, and when the measure again passed the House of Commons the provisions of the Parliament Act could be invoked.

Meantime the battle raged fiercely outside. Ulster, Orange Ulster, was the difficulty, and Belfast was the centre of resistance. The Scots who settled in Antrim and Down in the sixteenth century, and those who fought with Hugh O'Neill, were Catholics, and hated by England. But those who were planted in Ulster by James I were Presbyterians, and shared with English Protestants the broad acres from which the Irish had been driven. Many of these were uprooted in the rebellion of 1641, but the successes of Cromwell again brought to Ulster Catholics outlawry and confiscation of lands, and the expected redress never came from the perfidious Stuarts; and before the end of the seventeenth century the number of the Ulster Presbyterians was largely increased by an influx of Covenanters from Scotland and of Huguenots from France.

Intolerance of Catholics, and especially of Irish Catholics, was one of the chief articles of their creed. They looked down upon the Irish as a conquered and subject race, professing an inferior form of religion, unworthy of sharing with themselves the full rights of citizenship. Such was their bigotry that they were willing to submit to exclusion from office under the Test Act, because at the same time fresh penal enactments put additional fetters on Catholic limbs.

But though these Ulster Presbyterians were in a better position than their Catholic neighbours they had many grievances. The Protestants were their landlords and often their oppressors, and in the second half of the eighteenth century many Ulster Presbyterians, harassed by excessive rents at home, emigrated to America,

and in time swelled the ranks of Washington's army. Those at home joined the ranks of the Volunteers. Under the persuasive influence of Wolfe Tone they joined the Catholics in demanding Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, and when the Catholic delegates passed through Belfast in 1792, on their way to London to petition George III, the Presbyterians drew their carriage in triumph through the streets. These Presbyterians experienced to the full the rigours of Camden and Fitzgibbon, and General Lake recommended in 1796 that " Belfast ought to be proclaimed and punished most severely, as it is plain that every act of sedition originates in the town ".[1] In the rebellion of 1798 the city gave its recruits to Henry Joy M'Cracken, and was the place of his execution, as it was the place of his birth.[2] These Belfast Presbyterians refrained from prominently opposing the Union, not because they loved the measure, but because they disliked co-operating with the Orangemen, at whose hands they had recently suffered so much.

The Union effected a change. The ground landlord of Belfast was the needy Marquis of Donegal, who gave perpetuity leases to his tenants, and so had created in the city a sturdy middle class, men of independence and initiative, no longer under the tutelage of an unprogressive landlord, and free to think and act for themselves. The times were favourable. For, in the early years of the nineteenth century, while agriculture was depressed, there was a quickening of industrial life. Linen-works, rope-works, tobacco-works, and, later on, distilleries and shipbuilding were set up in Belfast, and brought wealth and importance to the city. Because this happy turn of affairs came after the Union, it became the fashion to look upon the Union as its cause, and in time the workman believed this, and, blessing the Union, he cursed Home Rule. The Protestant oligarchy favoured the continuance of the Union, because it secured these privileges in a Protestant and foreign Parliament. The capitalists agreed with the landlords, and, in the selfish interests of wealth, fostered religious animosities, dreading

[1] Winder Good, *Ulster and Ireland*, p. 60, extract quoted.
[2] F. J. Bigger, *Antrim and Down in 1798*.

that Catholics and Protestants might unite to work for social reform.

It is true that Presbyterians from Belfast and its neighbourhood joined the Tenant Right movement of 1850, and some joined the Land League of a later day. But they were only a few. The powerful influence of Dr. Cooke gave a fatal bias to the Ulster Presbyterian mind, making the Presbyterians, and especially the Presbyterian ministers, intolerant in religion and reactionary in politics; [1] and this has continued to be the Ulster Presbyterian attitude towards Catholics and the Catholic demand for Home Rule.

As for the Orangeman of Belfast, the Unionist ally of the Presbyterian, he can hardly be considered a Protestant, as he will not frequent the Protestant Church and has no definite religious conviction. But in politics he is a sound Protestant, identifying Unionism and Protestantism, and believing that a good Protestant discharges his duties as such if he abhors all Papists and cries "to Hell with the Pope!"

With the Protestant and Presbyterian ministers, the capitalist and the workmen attached to the Union and hating Home Rule, Belfast is regarded by all good Unionists as a sort of sacred city; it is as Mecca to the Mohammedans. Thither came Lord Randolph Churchill in 1886 to stir up opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, and to proclaim to the world that, rather than have Home Rule, Ulster would fight and Ulster would be right. Thither came Mr. Balfour a few years later, and thither came Sir Edward Carson to stir up sectarian animosity for political ends. As the recognized leader of the Irish Unionists, he was always well received. Unprogressive and reactionary, all his sympathies with property and privilege, he was a prime favourite with the landlords and the capitalists. With these were ranged the Protestant clergymen, hating the memory of Gladstone, and still mourning over their disestablished Church, and the clergy of the manse, steeped in the teachings of Dr. Cooke. A lawyer of long standing, accustomed as such to make the worst side appear

[1] Latimer's *The Irish Presbyterian Church*, Good, pp. 108–13.

the better, Carson had no scruple about making reckless statements, and no compunction if these statements were utterly untrue. He painted the Orangemen as lovers of liberty, and the Catholics as intolerant, and thus won the cheers of the shipyard mobs. Nor could anything be better calculated to win favour with the Presbyterian manse than his idea of a covenant against Home Rule. For the manse recalled the great days of the seventeenth century, when the Scottish Presbyterians vowed that they would have neither Popery nor prelacy; and the Belfast Presbyterians regarded these Covenanters as their ancestors and their models.

In 1913 *The Times* wrote: "By disciplining the Ulster democracy and by leading it to look up to them, the clergy and gentry of Ulster are providing against the spread of revolutionary doctrine and free thought." This was what suited Carson. He linked opposition to Irish self-government with the general campaign against democracy.[1] He wanted to turn the Liberals out of office and put the Tories in, and utilized the Belfast workmen to attain his end. He appealed to the workman's prejudices and to his bigotry, and he got the workman's vote, but he did not even pretend to any sympathy with the workman's desire for better conditions of work and pay; and when he turned his Ulster Unionist Council into the Central Authority of the Provisional Government, in anticipation of the passing of Home Rule, not a single labour man found a place on the body. There were peers, parsons, and plutocrats, and that was all.[2] The English Tory leaders who joined Carson and acted with him felt as he did. English Tories who hated democracy, politicians anxious for place and position, in order to attain their ends, patronized the Ulster Orangeman, praised his supposed virtues, magnified his fears, and encouraged him to open rebellion against dangers that they knew well would never come. Nor did they impose any restraint on themselves as to the language they thought right to use.

Most of these political leaders were Privy Councillors, and as such had taken the following oath: "I shall to my uttermost bear faith and allegiance unto the King's Majesty, and shall assist

[1] Good, p. 201. [2] Good, p. 203.

and defend all jurisdictions, pre-eminences, and authorities granted to His Majesty and annexed to the Crown by Acts of Parliament or otherwise, against all foreign princes, persons, prelates, states, or potentates, and generally in all things shall do as a faithful and true servant ought to do to His Majesty. So help me God." The ordinary citizen swears allegiance, and the soldier swears: "I do make oath that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George V, his heirs and successors in person, crown, and dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, his heirs and successors, and of the generals and officers set over me. So help me God." These oaths impose obligations that are specially grave on soldiers and Privy Councillors, the first named of whom are the defenders and the second of whom are the advisers of the sovereign. Nor can the statement be challenged that "to resist the decrees of Parliament by force of arms is to wage war against the Crown".[1]

Even a Privy Councillor could lawfully oppose Home Rule by speech and vote. But Sir Edward Carson went far beyond this when he declared that he and his friends would not submit to a Home Rule Parliament, and when, in anticipation of such being set up by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, he made arrangements for the Provisional Government of Ulster, this Government to begin its duties on the day the Home Rule Bill became law. He added that, if necessary, the men of Ulster would march from Belfast to Cork and take the consequences, even if not one of them ever returned. Earlier in the same year a military officer, Captain Craig, M.P., expressed a preference for the Kaiser rather than John Redmond; and Lord Londonderry declared that "if the worst came to the worst, they would fight".[2]

The next year saw the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, and Carson and his friends, not content with opposing it in Parliament, renewed their appeals to force. Carson himself protested that he was not out for holiday-making; that the Government in bringing in a Home Rule Bill had declared war and that he

[1] *A Handbook for Rebels.* From *Daily Mail*, Jan. 19, 1911.
[2] House of Lords, July, 1911.

accepted their challenge; that if an Irish Parliament were set up he would not recognize its authority; and that he did not care twopence whether to do so was treason or not.[1] In the same month he witnessed at Belfast the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant by, it was claimed, 250,000 Ulster men and women, pledging themselves not to submit to the authority of an Irish Parliament if such were called into existence. And he told a London audience that he was going over to Ulster " to break every law that was possible, and he dared the Government to prosecute him ".[2]

Knowing well that the Ulster Orangemen could do little by themselves, Carson appealed to the Unionists of Great Britain, and he did not appeal in vain. The new leader, Mr. Bonar Law, had already made his pilgrimage to Belfast, and in a speech at Larne said that if the Home Rule Bill passed, God help Ulster, but Heaven help the Government that tried to enforce it.[3] At Blenheim, in the following July, he made a sort of ex cathedra announcement, telling the world, with all the authority attached to his position, that if Ulster resisted Home Rule, " I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go which I shall not be ready to support ". Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P., carried less weight than his leader, but he was even more boastful and defiant. The Unionists of Ulster would have in their defiance the full support of the Unionist members of Parliament; he believed that in Liverpool nine out of every ten men were with them; that the Government would not have the nerve to use coercion in Ulster, and if they did they would be lynched from the London lamp-posts.[4] This speech was made appropriately in the fervid atmosphere of Portadown. It was reasonable to expect violence of language from an Orange Grand Master like Colonel Wallace;[5] and nobody knowing the Abercorn family and its traditions would expect liberal sentiments from Lord Claud Hamilton.[6] Better,

[1] Speech at Coleraine, Sept. 21, 1912.
[2] *Grammar of Anarchy*, p. 10.
[3] Speech, April 9, 1912.
[4] Speech, Sept. 25, 1912.
[5] Speech at Lisburn, May 14, 1912.
[6] Speech in the House of Commons, May 14, 1912.

however, might be expected from a respected lawyer like Mr. Duke than his oracular pronouncement that "the men of Ulster have a moral right to resist, and the killing of men who so resist is not an act of oppression—it is an act of murder".[1]

The Churches were not wanting in violence and encouragement of lawlessness. The Rev. Mr. Anderson begged his audience to put their trust in God and be ready to shed their blood and risk their lives on behalf of the great privileges they enjoyed.[2] The Rev. Dr. M'Kean, an ex-Moderator, did not think it beneath the dignity of the pulpit, nor unworthy of a Christian minister, to say at a special religious service in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, that they were called upon to defend more than their faith; and he told his fellow-countrymen that "so long as they (the Government) persisted in that preposterous policy, they would meet them with the old battle-cry of the Maiden City".[3] The Protestant Bishop of Down would not be silent on such an occasion, and in his cathedral in Belfast he extolled the men of Ulster for their noble spirit of self-sacrifice, and described the Covenant to which they had all subscribed as nothing more than a readiness "to make any sacrifice to avert the greatest of all calamities".

With the year 1913 came the passing of the Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons and its rejection in the House of Lords, then its reintroduction and passing in the Commons, followed by its rejection in the Lords. All this time excitement in Belfast continued, and violent speeches were made, sown thickly with threats of rebellion. In spite of Unionist protestations of loyalty to the Empire, the Rev. Chancellor Hobson, at Kilmorarity, near Portadown, proclaimed to all that "if Home Rule is passed I would not care whether the British Empire went to smash or not".[4] This was the attitude of a Christian minister professing a religion founded upon love. Rather than give four-fifths of his countrymen the same rights as Australians and South Africans had—the right of governing themselves under the British flag—

[1] Speech at Exeter, Oct., 1912. [2] Discourse at Irvinestown, May 10, 1912.
[3] Sermon in the presence of Sir Edward Carson, Sept. 28, 1912.
[4] Speech at Easter, 1913.

he would prefer to see the ruin of the British Empire. The same attitude was taken up by Mr. James Chambers, M.P., a lawyer who expected promotion from the British Government. If Home Rule passed, he would no longer sing "God Save the King", and if misfortunes overtook England, he would laugh at her calamity.[1] Love of liberty, and, above all, liberty for the majority of Irishmen, could hardly be expected from the Beresfords, with their black record in Irish history, and we find Lord Charles Beresford telling the House of Commons, that if Home Rule passed, and English troops were sent to Ireland to enforce it, he would go over and fight against them. "That is not swagger, that is what I intend to do if you send troops to Ireland."

As might be supposed, Sir Edward Carson was very active, and made many speeches in Parliament and on public platforms. In July he advised the Ulster Unionists to pay no taxes after Home Rule had come.[2] At Belfast he warned the Government that Unionist Ulster would have to be governed as a conquered community.[3] On the same occasion the Unionist Council decreed itself the Central Authority of the Provisional Government, and its Standing Committee the Executive Committee of the Provisional Government. Sir Edward Carson was appointed Chairman of the Central Authority, Mr. Campbell, K.C., M.P., Legal Assessor, and among the other members of the Central Authority were Messrs. Bates, Brunskill, Chambers, Gordon, Moore, and Wilson, all well-known members of the Irish Bar. There were Committees for Finance, Law, Education, Customs and Excise, and Post Office; there was a Military Council, with a strong force of Volunteers, General Richardson and Colonel Hackett Pain being in command. On these committees titled Unionists were prominent, and on one committee, of the nineteen members no less than sixteen were peers.

By that time Sir Edward Carson could boast that he had the Unionists of Ulster with him; that he had a Provisional Government actually in being and ready to take over the government of

[1] Speech in Belfast, May 23, 1913. [2] Speech at Craigavon, July 12.
[3] Speech, Sept. 23.

London News Agency

THE PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ULSTER

Front Row (left to right): W. Moore, Lord Dunleath, Lord Londonderry, Lord Carson, Duke of Abercorn, Sir J. B. Lonsdale. In the second row may be seen: C. C. Craig, C. Featherstonhaugh, H. T. Barrie, Sir James Craig, General Sir George Richardson, W. J. Macgeagh MacCaw, P. Kerr-Smiley, Colonel Hacket-Pain, Captain The Hon. Arthur O'Neill.

the province; that he had organized a strong force of Ulster Volunteers prepared to resist Home Rule; that he had the support of the Protestant and Presbyterian Churches, and the Unionist newspapers in England, and the Unionist leader, Mr. Bonar Law, and the ex-leader, Mr. Balfour, all ready to back him up in armed resistance to the will of Parliament. In November the *Irish Churchman* knew for certain that offers of aid had been tendered, and would be cordially accepted, from the Kaiser in the event of Home Rule becoming law. As early as August of the same year Sir Edward Carson had been moving in that direction, and it was announced in the *Belfast Evening Telegraph*[1] that " he had the honour of receiving an invitation to lunch with the Kaiser at Homburg ".

Further, he had got about the same time " pledges and promises from some of the greatest generals in the army, that when the time comes, and if it is necessary, they will come over to help us to keep the old flag flying, and to defy those who would dare invade our liberties ".[2] One of his allies in the press wrote that the first act of coercion in Ulster, that is, the enforcement of the Home Rule Act, would annihilate constitutional government in the United Kingdom.[3] And the Legal Assessor of the Provisional Government, Mr. James Campbell, proclaimed from a public platform that civil war was the path of duty, and that no other alternative was left to the Ulster Unionists.[4]

Ever since the Union Ireland had, with some slight intervals, lived under coercion. To Ireland was denied the right to carry arms in defence of her personal and national liberties. Year after year the Peace Preservation Act was renewed, under which the carrying of arms was prohibited. But in 1906 the Liberals refused to renew the Act; though there were violent protests from the Orange members, Messrs. Craig, Lonsdale, and Barrie.[5] Henceforth both Orangeman and Nationalist were free to carry arms, and in his campaign against Home Rule Sir Edward Carson used

[1] Aug. 27, 1913.
[2] Speech at Antrim, Sept. 20, 1913.
[3] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Jan. 16, 1914.
[4] Speech at Swansea, March 13, 1914.
[5] *Hansard's Debates.*

this right to the full. But he went far beyond what was legal. He organized the Ulster Volunteer Force into regiments and battalions and divisions; he encouraged them to drill and practise military manœuvres and import arms from abroad; he obtained promises from the King's officers to lead these volunteers in opposition to the considered decision of Parliament. Nor did he conceal that he was engaged in illegality. His friend, Colonel Hickman, M.P., told his audience at Wolverhampton that the Ulster Orangemen and their allies from Great Britain were not going to fight with dummy muskets. He had himself bought for them modern rifles and ammunition, and " if they only held the rifles straight there won't be many Nationalists to stand up against them ".[1]

About the same time the grounds of Baronscourt, the residence of the Duke of Abercorn, were turned into an armed camp for the Ulster Volunteers, where officers and men were trained under military experts. The commanding officer, General Richardson, inspected them, and was well pleased with the appearance of the men and with the instruction which they were receiving " in infantry training, musketry practice, and engineering ".[2] Not only was the Provisional Government a reality, but it had at its disposal a trained army of Orangemen, formidable in numbers and abundantly supplied with arms.

At last the Government woke up from its long sleep and issued a proclamation prohibiting the importation of arms into Ireland. But this did not moderate the violence of Sir Edward Carson's threats, nor stay the importation of arms by the Ulster Orangemen. Sir Edward was entertained to dinner by his friends and admirers in London in March, 1914, and then presented with a gleaming silver-handled sword with a blade of fine steel emblematic of " the stand the men of Ulster are making in defence of the Union ". The sword-blade bore the inscription, " Presented to Sir Edward Carson by friends of Ulster in sure hope that God will defend the right ". The " men of Ulster " making this presentation were the Dukes of Marlborough, Somerset, and Rutland, the Marquis

[1] Speech, Nov. 24, 1913. [2] *Northern Whig*, Oct. 7, 1913.

of Londonderry and Marquis of Salisbury, the Earls of Portsmouth, Malmesbury, and Selborne, and Lords Lonsdale, Milner, and others. These are not the stamp of men to show much zeal for civil or religious liberty, nor did one of them own a perch of land in Ulster except Lord Londonderry.[1]

In the next month, in spite of the Government proclamation, and in contempt of all law, huge consignments of arms were brought into Ulster for the Volunteers. There were 35,000 magazine rifles and 2,500,000 rounds of ammunition, purchased on the Continent, landed at Larne, Bangor, and Donaghadee, and distributed by private motor-cars throughout the province. And the Unionist papers gleefully noted that so perfect were the arrangements for the landing of these arms that not one weapon was seized.[2]

"The whole operation", says *The Times*, "was carried out with the greatest efficiency in detail. The towns and harbours at which the arms and ammunition were to be landed were cut off from all communication with the outside world for a space of from four to six hours. The local police in some, if not all, of these places were surrounded by a superior force, and, with the coastguards and customs officials, prevented from taking any action. All roads leading to the respective disembarking centres were picketed by strong guards of Volunteers, who allowed no one to pass without a permit, and this drew a protecting chain around each centre. The telephone and telegraph wires were temporarily put out of working order. In short, strict military discipline was imposed for a considerable time and in certain prescribed areas. No movement of any kind nor any communication with outside sources was allowed." [3]

Sir Edward Carson had no apology for thus impeding police and customs officers in the discharge of their duties, and when accused in the House of Commons he assumed full responsibility for what had been done.[4]

[1] *London Daily Express*, March 14, 1914. [2] *Northern Whig*.
[3] *The Times*, April 27, 1914.
[4] Speech in the House of Commons, April 29, 1914.

Efforts had also been made to tamper with the loyalty of the army, and not without success. An ex-Cabinet Minister, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, told a public meeting of his supporters that if the military were sent to Ulster to enforce the Act establishing Home Rule, " there was grave doubt as to whether the officers and men would obey the orders given to them. It was his conviction and belief that if the forces of the Crown were so employed, there were many officers and men who would decline to lift a hand against those who they believed were fighting a righteous cause." [1] Sir Edward Carson himself had gone far beyond the condition of conviction and belief, and had actual promises to rely upon. For he declared, in the following September, that " some of the greatest generals in the army were ready to join the Ulster rebels ", unmindful, it would seem, of the oath they had taken to be faithful to their King.[2] One of his titled supporters took the same line. " They were now asked ", he said, " to utilize the armed forces of the Crown to carry out the decrees of the dominant political caucus. In the name of justice to the army he protested emphatically against the army being so employed." [3]

The influence of party spirit is strong, and political leaders will often go to great lengths to discredit their opponents in order to attain to power themselves. But the conduct of those Unionist leaders was unprecedented, and it was specially reprehensible in the case of a party which boasted of its loyalty to the Crown and to the established institutions of the Empire. No Act of Parliament will command the undivided support of the community; there will be no Act to which a minority in the State will not be opposed. In every country constitutionally governed, where the people, rather than an individual, rule, the will of the majority must prevail. No other system can stand, and if a small minority can flout the considered decisions of the majority, as expressed in legislation, and break out into open rebellion rather than obey an Act of Parliament which it dislikes, there is an end to all constitutional government, and any reform of the law becomes impossible. Yet

[1] Speech at Cork, May 31, 1913. [2] Speech at Antrim, Sept. 20, 1913.
[3] Lord Willoughby de Broke in the House of Lords, Feb. 10, 1914.

this was the attitude taken up by the leaders of the great Unionist Party in 1913 and in 1914, and to support them in this attitude the leaders in the army were being seduced.

In a well-regulated army seduction ought to be impossible. The heads of the army are subject to the executive government, which in turn is responsible to Parliament. Officers and men must render unquestioning obedience to their superiors. They are soldiers and not politicians; and in France and Germany the officer who would dare to question the acts of his Government, and refuse to do a soldier's duty because he disapproved of what the Government did, would be promptly court-martialled and shot. In the British army this was, and is, so in theory; but in 1913 and 1914 theory and practice were found wide apart, and officers, forgetting that they were only soldiers, became political partisans.

An explanation of such strange conduct must be sought in the character of the families to which these officers belonged. For the most part they came from Unionist families, from the territorial aristocracy or from those who had acquired wealth in trade. They might be described, accurately enough, as from the idle rich, and frequently had more money than intellect. If they had passed through Woolwich or Sandhurst, they were often at the bottom of the list at examinations. Often unable to succeed at examinations, they passed, with an easier test, from a militia regiment to the regular army. Having got their commissions, they strutted about in red coats, taking little interest in a soldier's work and little pride in the great military profession. But if they knew little of tactics or strategy, of the campaigns of Hannibal or Napoleon or Marlborough, they knew much of society and of social requirements, and were in high favour with high-born dames. They shone in a drawing-room or a ballroom; they shot and rowed and fished; they played tennis and billiards and bridge, and they played them all with skill; they studied carefully the stud-book and the racing-calendar, and could at once tell what horse was likely to win the next Derby. Listening to their conversation on a boat or in a railway carriage, the traveller could not but remark what

little interest they took in military matters and how much they knew of horses and dogs.

When these gentlemen discussed politics, it was from the standpoint of those who want no change. They read *The Times* or *The Morning Post*, where they got the strong gospel of militant unionism; they detested democracy as opposed to wealth, and supported Carson because he was a reactionary and distrusted the people. Hereditary instincts, early training, and social influences combined to make them forget their duty and their oaths of loyalty; and when the officers at the Curragh were told that they might be sent to Ulster against the rebellious Orangemen, they mutinied and resigned their commissions.

The story was told in *The Morning Post*: "On Friday, 20th March, 1914, General Paget, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Ireland, sent for General Gough, commanding the Third Cavalry Brigade, and informed him that it was possible, and indeed probable, that the Government would wish to utilize the services of his brigade for active measures in Ulster. He told him that he had heard that there had been some manifestations of reluctance on the part of officers of the brigade to serve against the Ulster Protestants, and he also indicated that he had heard that General Gough himself had strong feelings on the subject. In order to test the matter beyond all kind of doubt, he informed General Gough that he would give him two hours to give him his decision on the subject.

"A conference of officers was held. Brigadier-General Gough, who was in command, said that he had already made up his mind, and requested the officers to consider their position and let him know the result. Immediately, practically all the officers stated they would follow the example of the General, and handed in their papers. The result was communicated by telephone to the Fifth Lancers at Marlborough Barracks, whose officers immediately followed their example. Out of 76 officers, 70 handed in their resignations, including Lord Holmpatrick."

It appears the War Office had heard that certain "evil disposed persons" would attempt to obtain arms and ammunition

from the Government stores in Ulster. And the War Office warned General Paget, the Irish Commander-in-Chief, that the stores at Armagh, Omagh, Carrickfergus, and Enniskillen were insufficiently guarded. He was therefore ordered to take the necessary steps and then report to the War Office.[1] It was because of this letter that General Paget interviewed General Gough and had to report that the General and 57 officers of the Third Cavalry Brigade would prefer to accept dismissal from the army rather than serve against Orange Ulster; and the same was true with the officers of the Fifth Lancers and the Sixteenth Lancers.[2]

Unionist newspapers and politicians, instead of being shocked, were jubilant. *The Morning Post* of 26th March gleefully wrote that " the army had killed Home Rule, and the sooner the Government recognized the fact the better for the country ". Lord Robert Cecil denied that the army was the servant of the Government—it was the servant of the nation, and should not be used " as the instrument of a mere party like the Government ".[3] Mr. Walter Long, a narrow-minded reactionary of the worst type, predicted that the Government could never use the forces of the Crown to enforce the Home Rule Bill on Ireland.[4] Finally, Mr. Bonar Law, with all the authority of his position as Unionist leader, declared his entire satisfaction with the mutinous officers. " Any officer who refuses is only fulfilling his duty—in my belief nothing can save the army now, except a clear declaration on the part of the Government that officers will not be compelled to engage in civil war against their will." [5]

Fortified by such influential support, Sir Edward Carson went on his way, and in the next month German Mausers were landed in thousands at Larne, wires were cut, and police overpowered. He openly defied the Government, and told them that in spite of all their fleet and all their preparations he would have more Mausers; and he wanted his Orange Volunteers to be ready to

[1] Letter from the War Office to General Paget, March 14, 1914.
[2] Wire from General Paget to War Office, March 20, 1914.
[3] Speech in the House of Commons, April 1, 1914.
[4] Speech in the House of Commons, March 31, 1914.
[5] *Hansard*, March 23.

use them. "Remember your arms and keep them, no matter what happens. I rely on every man to fight for his arms and to let no man take them from him. I don't care who they are or what authority they have got, I tell you to keep your arms—I will rely upon your discipline under your officers, if the necessity arises, to use your arms." [1]

By that time the Home Rule Bill had passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. It had been reintroduced in March, and on the 25th of May had passed its third reading by a large majority. What its fate would be in the House of Lords mattered little, because by the provisions of the Parliament Act it became law on passing for the third time through the House of Commons, irrespective of the judgment of the Peers. But there was no desire either among the Liberals or the Irish Nationalists to force Home Rule on a reluctant, even if unwilling, minority round Belfast, and every effort was made to win the acquiescence of the Orangemen. It was even proposed by the Liberal Government, and assented to by Mr. Redmond, that each county in Ulster would get, separately, the option of inclusion or exclusion. A vote of each county would be taken, and if any county voted no, it might remain out for a period of six years. If in the meantime Home Rule had worked badly and Orange predictions had been verified, there could be little doubt that they would be allowed to remain outside permanently.

But these concessions in no way abated the opposition of Sir Edward Carson and the other Unionist leaders. It was after the Liberal proposals of exclusion had been laid before Parliament that Mauser rifles from Germany had been landed at Larne. Sir Edward Carson would accept nothing but a vote of the Ulster counties for permanent, not temporary, exclusion from the Home Rule Parliament, and he would only put this proposal before the Ulster Unionists, and would not promise to recommend its acceptance.[2] This, indeed, was unlikely, as he was still drilling and arming his followers; his Provisional Government met at Belfast in July behind closed doors, protected by armed Volunteers; and

[1] Speech at Belfast, June 6, 1914. [2] *Hansard*, March 10, 1914.

he told the Orangemen at Larne that he was with them in heart and conscience. " I, at all events, will go on with you to the very end. We will win or we will go down together."

The truth was that Sir Edward Carson cared little for the Orangemen, and such men as Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. F. E. Smith cared less. Their anxiety was to drive the Liberals from office and to discredit and even repeal the Parliament Act. As long as the Liberals were in power, the Unionists were necessarily shut out from the fat salaries of Cabinet Ministers and from the influence and privileges attached to the governing of a world-wide Empire. And if the Parliament Act could be rendered useless by threats of armed rebellion and corruption of the army chiefs, the House of Lords would come again into its own. It would again be the citadel of reaction, the great obstacle in the path of reform.

CHAPTER IX

Liberal Treachery

When the Liberal leaders appealed to the people in 1906, they gave Ireland no place on their programme. They had not formally abandoned Home Rule, but they had certainly shown no enthusiasm for it, and did not stand where Gladstone stood. They felt sure of winning without the Irish vote, and were returned with such a majority that they could dispense with Irish support in Parliament. The leaders were less friendly to Ireland than the rank and file, and though they admitted the anomaly of Dublin Castle, they would give nothing but the Councils Bill of 1907. Mr. Asquith would go no further in the next year, and for the remainder of the Parliament of 1906 nothing was done to change the character of Irish government.

An Irish Party capably led would have held aloof from such a Ministry, and would have voted against the Budget of 1909. But the party led by Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were willing to be what Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, described them as, " the puppets of the English Liberals ", voting for all Liberal measures, even when one of these involved a heavy addition to the overtaxation of Ireland. Nor was there much consolation in Mr. Asquith's appeal to the people on the eve of the General Election of 1910. He was not then so confident of an overwhelming victory as he had been four years earlier; it was important to get the Irish vote in Great Britain, and he might be in need of the Irish vote in Parliament. Therefore he thought it politic to proclaim at the Albert Hall in December, 1907, that Ireland was still the one failure of British statesmanship. Hitherto he had made

no serious effort to settle the Irish question, and now he would only give Irish self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs, "while safeguarding the supreme and undeniable authority of the Imperial Parliament". He was much more concerned about the Lords' veto than about Home Rule. In the new Parliament he disliked being dependent on the Irish vote, and attempted to settle the Lords' veto by negotiation with the Unionists, without consulting the Irish leaders, or caring what were their views.

When he failed and had again to appeal to the electors at the end of 1910, he was ready to promise that if returned to power he would bring in a Home Rule Bill.[1] In return he got the Irish vote in Parliament. But his promises were soon forgotten, and while Ireland got from him an Insurance Act, which she did not want and which was unsuitable to her needs, no Home Rule Bill was introduced until 1912.

An examination of its clauses showed what Mr. Asquith meant by self-government for Ireland in purely Irish affairs, and by the unquestioned supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Ireland was supposed to be a nation, and the Home Rule Bill was an answer to a national appeal. Yet this Parliament of a nation could not settle its own form of government, nor its foreign policy, nor its fiscal policy, nor the all-important question of the land. Nor could it give Ireland an army or navy, nor even a policeman, until after the lapse of a number of years. Hampered at every turn, it could neither levy nor collect its taxes, and it must sit, like Lazarus at the gate, exhibiting its sores to the Imperial Parliament and begging for doles out of its own money.

Mr. Balfour was right in saying that Ireland could not be a nation if this was the sort of Parliament she was to have.[2] There was truth in Mr. Butcher's description that it was a mongrel Parliament, which was certainly not Dominion Home Rule; an assembly fenced round with wire entanglements of constitutional and financial limitations. Mr. Parnell once advised the British Parliament either to trust Ireland entirely or to trust her not at all;

[1] Speech at Fife, Dec. 6, 1910. [2] *Hansard*, Jan. 15, 1913.

and even Mr. Law suggested that if Ireland was to get Home Rule at all, she ought to get the same form as Canada.[1]

This, however, was not Mr. Asquith's way. Unable to remain in office without Irish Nationalist support, he continued to promise, but delayed Home Rule as long as possible, and then produced a measure which conferred no real power, and which in every clause expressed his contempt for Ireland and his distrust of her people. Nor was the measure, halting and incomplete as it was, improved in its passage through Parliament. On the contrary, the Government accepted amendments which involved further limitations and restrictions; and Mr. William O'Brien was quite accurate in saying that it had been mutilated in Committee, and could not as it stood be a final settlement of the Irish question.[2] Before the Home Rule Bill was introduced, Mr. Asquith promised that it would be a measure which would give Ireland, in regard to Irish affairs, not a shadow or *simulacrum* of power, but full self-government.[3] The Bill which passed from the House of Commons to the slaughter-house where the Peers held sway was a poor fulfilment of this promise.

No doubt Mr. Asquith had to contend with serious difficulties. A good proportion of his followers were men with no enthusiasm for liberty, who but a few years earlier opposed Home Rule, and who were determined, if Home Rule must be given, to make it as grudging and ungenerous as they could. Within the Cabinet were men like Lord Haldane and Sir Edward Grey, suitable representatives of these moderate Liberals, thinking much of the Empire and little of Ireland, and disposed to listen favourably to the unreasonable demands of Belfast bigotry.

Mr. Lloyd George was a Radical, or supposed to be one. At all events he was a powerful member of the Government, eloquent and persuasive both in Parliament and on the public platform. But though he had hard words for the peers and the parsons in Great Britain, for grasping landlords and grasping capitalists, he had none for the Orange rowdies of Belfast, and none for Sir

[1] *Hansard*, April 16, 1912. [2] *Hansard*, Jan. 15, 1913.
[3] Speech at East Fife, Oct. 22, 1911.

Edward Carson and his friends, the Belfast capitalists. Far from helping Home Rule—and he could have greatly assisted if he wished—Mr. William O'Brien accurately described him as hating Home Rule and hating Irish land purchase: "He was the evil genius of his own party even more than he is of Ireland."[1] At the time these words were spoken they were considered too strong, the usual exaggeration of Mr. O'Brien. But they have been fully verified by the events of the succeeding years.

As for Mr. Winston Churchill, there could be no doubt that he had inherited to the full the treachery of his famous ancestor, the first Duke of Marlborough. John Churchill owed his first advancement to James II, and he deserted his patron and friend in the very crisis of his fate, and so helped to send James into exile and to put William of Orange on the throne. Winston Churchill was the son of a Tory leader, and had himself held office in a Tory Ministry. But he deserted the Tories as a rat deserts a sinking ship, and he soon became a Liberal Minister. He was not, however, a sincere convert to Liberalism, but rather a political adventurer, ready to adopt any political creed if he could thereby get office. He was one of the first to speak of giving what he called safeguards to North-East Ulster; and while the Home Rule Bill was passing through Parliament, he helped to confuse the issues and weaken his own side by inviting North-East Ulster to say what it wanted. He admitted that Ulster, meaning Orange Ulster, was a serious obstacle, and plainly favoured giving that province separate treatment.[2] A little later he supplemented this speech by another, in which he protested that if the Orange counties of Ulster claimed special treatment, the claim would be met by concession. These counties would be cut out of any Home Rule scheme, and remain precisely as they were.[3] On the Home Rule question he said that no proposal would be ruled out by the Government "which is compatible with the fundamental principle of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Execu-

[1] Speech at Cork, Nov. 15, 1912. [2] Speech at Dundee, Sept. 11, 1912.
[3] Speech at Dundee, Oct. 8, 1912.

tive responsible to it, and which is not destructive of the permanent unity of Ireland ".[1]

With such colleagues Mr. Asquith's task was not easy, and it was made much less easy because of his own lack of sincerity and conviction. He was once described by Sir Edward Carson as a man with a strong face and weak knees, and the description fitted him well. Nor did this appear anywhere, or at any time, more apparent than in his treatment of Sir Edward Carson himself. Mr. Churchill announced that he would come to Belfast early in 1912, and in due course the date was fixed for the 8th of February, the place of meeting to be the Ulster Hall. The invitation to the meeting came from the Ulster Liberal Association, the members of which were mostly Protestants, and in most cases also men of substantial position and moderate views. They favoured Home Rule, but were in no sense men of extreme views, and would be very unlikely to assent to any measure which would inflict injustice either on the religion or the industry of Belfast.

Nor did Mr. Churchill foreshadow any such measure. He announced that the coming Home Rule Bill had been agreed to after consultation with the Irish leaders, and in foreshadowing its provisions he pointed out its serious limitations. It would exclude from the power of the Irish Parliament old age pensions and land purchase, would confer very limited power in the field of finance be debarred from dealing with religion, and if it enacted any law striking at Belfast or Ulster Protestantism its acts would be nullified by the Privy Council, by the Lord-Lieutenant, and by the British Parliament. Mr. Redmond, who was present, subscribed to all these limitations and restrictions, and both he and Mr. Churchill believed that such a Home Rule measure would satisfy Ireland and placate America as well as the self-governing colonies of the British Empire. The Bill would look to the future federation of the Empire, and the ultimate object aimed at would be an Empire strengthened and united because of the contentment of its parts.

The Orangemen might have come to Mr. Churchill's meeting

[1] Speech at Manchester, Oct. 19, 1912.

in the Ulster Hall and have put to Mr. Churchill in a reasoned manner their objections to Home Rule. Or they might have had a separate meeting and attacked Mr. Churchill and his Home Rule proposals. But this is not the way of the Belfast Orangeman, pampered by privilege, sustained in long-continued ascendancy, the spoiled child of every British Government. He had already given his adhesion to Sir Edward Carson's programme, and expressed his contempt at any meetings for the tamer methods of constitutional redress. The Unionist Council had already passed many votes of confidence in Sir Edward Carson, and asked that a Provisional Government should be set up in Ulster if Home Rule passed. Further, this Unionist Council declared that Mr. Churchill should not hold his meeting in the Ulster Hall. If he persisted, he would be stopped by force; and Mr. Horner, K.C., M.P., on being interrupted at a public meeting with the cry of " Long live Churchill ", retorted: " I do not know whether if he goes to Belfast he will live long." [1]

When Mr. Lloyd George was coming to Belfast in 1907, he was threatened with violence by the Orange leaders. But Mr. George estimated at their real value these Orange threats, and calling out a sufficient force of police, the Orange threats came to nothing, and his meeting was peaceably held. In 1912 the Government and the authorities at Dublin Castle were more easily cowed, and the Orangemen were allowed to forcibly seize the Ulster Hall and forcibly hold it; and Mr. Churchill, bowing before the storm, was compelled to have his meeting in the Celtic Park.

This was the beginning of the end for the Liberal Party. For if a Liberal Government would not call out its soldiers and police to protect one of its Ministers, but instead, would bow down before the bluster of Belfast treason, it was useless and had forfeited all right to rule an Empire. And if a small minority could flout the Government and flout Parliament, democracy was a farce, and force the ultimate court of appeal. Sir Edward Carson was highly delighted. The last thing he wanted was a conflict with

[1] Speech at Hale, Jan. 23, 1912.

British soldiers, or even with Irish police. The timidity, probably the treachery, of his opponents, had saved him from himself, had given him a triumph without the sacrifice of a drop of blood; and after Mr. Churchill's meeting in Belfast, the Ulster Council was more aggressive and more confident than ever. " Recruiting for the Ulster Volunteers, which had hitherto gone forward slowly, received a tremendous impetus, and within a few weeks the Unionist Council was able to announce that over 100,000 men had been enrolled."[1]

Emboldened by his success, Sir Edward Carson's truculence increased. He defied the Government—the craven Government he called it—to arrest him, and announced in London that he would go over to Ulster " to break every law that was possible ".[2] The next month, the Catholics in the shipbuilding yards in Belfast were attacked by gangs of Orangemen and driven from their employment, and the Government gave them no adequate protection. Sir Edward Carson continued to defy the Government, and Mr. Bonar Law, whom he had harnessed to his chariot, announced that he regarded the Liberal Government as a revolutionary committee, and that in his opposition to this Government " we shall not be restrained by the bounds which would influence us in an ordinary political struggle ".[3] Nor had Mr. Asquith any answer to make to this except to describe Mr. Bonar Law's language as " The reckless rhodomontade at Blenheim, as developed and amplified in the Ulster Campaign, furnishes for the future a complete grammar of anarchy."[4]

This was well said, and Mr. Asquith was well known to be an accomplished rhetorician. But rhetoric was not the most suitable weapon to employ, and it made little impression on the Belfast Orangemen. Sir Edward Carson went on his way, unheeding, satisfied, after his successful flouting of Mr. Churchill at Belfast in February, that he was quite safe. Instead of showing resentment, Mr. Churchill was quite willing to concede, and issued an

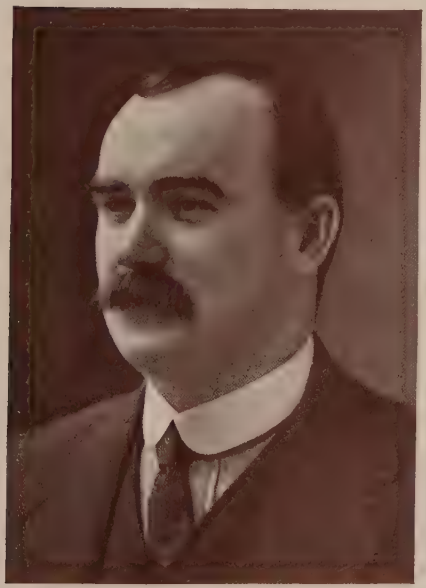
[1] Winder Good, *Ulster and Ireland*, pp. 204–5.
[2] Speech at Criterion Restaurant, June 24, 1912.
[3] Speech at Blenheim, July 27, 1912. [4] Speech at Ladybank, Oct. 5, 1912.

Lafayette

PATRICK H. PEARSE

Griffin

SIR ROGER CASEMENT



Lafayette

JAMES CONNOLLY

Lafayette

PROFESSOR J. MACNEILL

invitation to North-East Ulster to say what it wanted.[1] Sir Edward Carson had his Ulster Day and his Ulster Covenant in Belfast on the 28th of September, and *The Times* laid down the curious doctrine that, for political purposes, though not for Parliamentary purposes, the Orange minority was equivalent to a majority.[2] All through the Home Rule debates in Parliament, Sir Edward Carson's speeches were a mixture of ridicule and defiance, contempt for Mr. Asquith and his Ministers, and a firm resolution not to submit to Home Rule. "All we ask", he said, "is to be left alone. We will not have Home Rule."[3]

It was not easy, perhaps, to deal with threats of contingent rebellion, uttered by a skilful lawyer, though it is quite certain that if such threats had been uttered by a Nationalist leader he would have been prosecuted and imprisoned. But arming the Ulster Volunteers was a more serious matter, and by June, 1913, large quantities of arms and ammunition, and even machine-guns, had been imported by the Orangemen,[4] and some months later the Ulster Unionist Council was turned into the Provisional Government of Ulster, with a large armed and disciplined force at its command.

Carson's confidence increased as the months passed. He had the promise of the Unionist leaders that if the battle came it would not be confined to Ireland;[5] and he had the knowledge that ever since the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Churchill and Sir Edward Grey were willing to exclude Ulster, if only Ulster persevered in her opposition. Mr. Churchill, indeed, stated that he was willing to give North-East Ulster special treatment; and when this was objected to by the Nationalists as destroying the unity of their country, Mr. Churchill amended his statement by adding that the Government would not assent to any proposals which would be destructive of the permanent unity of Ireland.[6] Mr. Asquith, as if by concerted arrangement, used almost the same words. "Nothing was to be done which will

[1] Speech at Dundee, Sept. 11, 1912.
[2] *The Times*, Oct. 30, 1912.
[3] Speech at Belfast, May 16, 1913.
[4] *The Northern Whig*, June 4, 1913.
[5] Speech at Belfast, Oct. 2, 1913.
[6] Speech at Manchester, Oct. 19, 1913.

erect a permanent barrier in the way of Irish unity." It would, of course, be the duty of the Executive Government to put down armed resistance to an Act of Parliament. The need for such resistance would not arise if Sir Edward Carson was satisfied, and all he wanted was that Ulster would still have the Union and not a Dublin Parliament.

These speeches were a plain hint to persevere in his opposition and the Liberal Government would give way. Mr. T. M. Healy uttered a warning that Mr. Redmond was about to betray Ireland,[1] and this was taken to mean that Mr. Asquith would betray Redmond by partitioning Ireland, and thus compromising with Carson. If Mr. Redmond assented to any such arrangement, he would be repudiated by his own people; and if Mr. Asquith contemplated such a surrender to Sir Edward Carson, a ministerial crisis was at hand. This was the last thing Mr. Asquith wanted, and he hastened to say that " the Irish members have trusted us with a loyalty that has never wavered . . . that that trust we will most certainly not betray ".[2]

Mr. Redmond was more than satisfied with these assurances, and told his constituents that " The Prime Minister is as firm as a rock and is, I believe, the strongest and the sanest man who has appeared in British politics in our time. To-day he remains unmoved by the concerted shriek of wild and despairing malice." [3] What value there was in Mr. Asquith's assurances, and what little grounds for Mr. Redmond's satisfaction, soon appeared. Parliament was opened in February, and the King's Speech called for a settlement of the Home Rule question by mutual concession. The sovereign does not make any such speech without being advised by his Ministers, and the words used on these occasions are not his own. What was asked, then, was asked by Mr. Asquith and his colleagues, and it could only mean that a wretched Home Rule scheme would be granted to a dismembered Ireland. Accordingly Mr. Asquith declared, on an amendment to the Address, that he would be perfectly prepared to welcome the inclusion of

[1] Speech at Mitchelstown, Nov. 16, 1913.
[2] Speech at Leeds, Nov. 27, 1914. [3] Speech at Waterford, Jan. 25, 1914.

Ulster with the option of exclusion after a time; and the next month his proposals took concrete form.

These were that the Home Rule Bill as it stood should pass with the consent of all parties. It would at the same time be agreed that each Ulster county, including Belfast and Derry as separate counties, might, within three months of the passing of the Bill, and on a requisition of one-tenth of the electors of each county, on the question of inclusion under Home Rule, take a vote. If by a bare majority of the Parliamentary electors it voted " No ", it would be excluded for a period of six years. During that time there would necessarily be two General Elections, and if a Unionist Government came in, it could make the exclusion permanent, or even repeal the Home Rule Act altogether. Even at the end of six years the excluded Ulster counties could not be included under Home Rule without the consent of the Imperial Parliament. There would thus be given an experimental period of six years, and if during that time the Dublin Parliament had done its work badly, there could be little doubt that the assent of the British Parliament would never be given to the inclusion of any Ulster county desiring to remain out.

This was an extraordinary concession to any minority. If even an English minority objected to any Government measure, they would be told that in every constitutionally governed country a majority must rule. If an Irish Nationalist minority objected to a Bill, their objections would be summarily and scornfully overruled. Very frequently, even a Nationalist majority protested, and in vain, when a coercion Bill was being passed. But the Belfast Orangemen, patronized by Tory leaders, could arm and drill and hurl defiance at all government and law; and instead of being resolutely and sternly met, Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson were consulted by Mr. Asquith, and these concessions were made in the hope of buying off their opposition to Home Rule.

Mr. Redmond, who on every occasion had given way to Mr. Asquith, was again yielding, though he declared that now at last the limits of concession had been reached. Mr. William

O'Brien objected to have an Orange Free State set up in Ireland; and Mr. Healy was so indignant that he would prefer the loss of the Home Rule Bill. It was plain, he said, that Redmond would concede anything to Asquith, that Asquith would concede anything to Carson, and that the Liberal Government gave its approval to the Ulster Orangemen's appeal to force. Indeed, even these concessions were not enough for them. Mr. Bonar Law wanted a referendum on the whole proposals, so as to discredit the Parliament Act. Sir Edward Carson wanted the time limit taken away, and then he would put his proposals before his friends in Belfast, though he did not say he would recommend acceptance. As for the Orange leaders in Belfast, it soon became evident that their demand was for the permanent exclusion of all Ulster. They insolently declared that they were conceding much in allowing the three other provinces to have Home Rule.[1]

At this turn of affairs Mr. Churchill's irritation increased. Within the Cabinet, in agreement with Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Birrell, he had been advocating special treatment for Ulster. To him, and still more to Mr. George, were due these proposals of exclusion; and now his only reward at the hands of Sir Edward Carson was to be flouted and scorned. He answered back with vehemence. If Carsonites disliked Home Rule, let them, like all other citizens, agitate for a majority at the General Election, and then repeal the objectionable law. They were ready to coerce four-fifths of Ireland, but were not ready to submit to law themselves. As for Bonar Law, he cared nothing for Ulster. What he wanted was a General Election, so as to replace the Liberals in office; this was his demand " behind every strident note which he rasps out ".

Carson's only arguments were force and the menace of civil war. But Mr. Churchill warned him that the first British soldier or bluejacket shot in Ulster would raise an explosion from which the Unionists would soon recoil. Then Ulster affairs would be forgotten, and the issue would be " whether civil and Parliamentary government in these realms is to be beaten down by the

[1] *Hansard.*

menace of armed force". "There must be", he said, "the same law for the rich as for the poor, the same for the orange as for the green. If Ulster wanted peace she could have it. But if there is no wish for peace, if every effort to meet their views is only to be used as a means of breaking down Home Rule and of barring the way to the rest of Ireland, if Ulster is to become a tool in party calculations, if the civil and Parliamentary systems under which we have dwelt, and our forefathers before us, for so many years are to be brought to the crude challenge of force—if all the loose, wanton, and reckless chatter we have been forced to listen to all these many months, is in the end to disclose a sinister and revolutionary purpose, then I can only say to you, let us go forward together and put these grave matters to the proof."[1]

This speech brought dismay into the Orange ranks, and if a strong force of troops had been sent to Belfast, not to attack anybody, but to protect the Ulster Nationalists from the threat of armed and insolent Volunteers, the Ulster trouble would soon have been over. But the Carsonites knew that Mr. Churchill's valiant words would not be followed by valiant action. Mr. Asquith still clung to his proposal of excluding Ulster counties. Mr. Lloyd George was entertaining the Nationalist leaders at breakfast and endeavouring to procure their assent to have the time limit dropped, so that any Ulster county excluding itself would be excluded for all time. And it was said that in this matter only Mr. Devlin stood firm, that Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon were quite ready to give way.

But while Liberals and Nationalists were crying peace, peace, where there was no peace, Sir Edward Carson remained boastfully defiant. The Government's proposal, he said, was not worth the consideration of the people of Ulster. The Government was a Government of cowards, afraid to prosecute himself, though they told him he was guilty of treasonable conspiracy. They were the slaves of Mr. Redmond, entrenching themselves behind the King's troops.[2] Then, protesting that his place was in Ulster, he left the House of Commons, shaking his fist at the Liberal and

[1] Speech at Bradford, March 15, 1914. [2] *Hansard*, March 19, 1914.

Nationalist benches as he passed out. A few days later it was discovered that the officers at the Curragh, headed by General Gough, had mutinied, declaring that they would not fight the Ulster Orangemen.

The same muddling and treachery as were shown in dealing with Sir Edward Carson were shown in dealing with the mutinous army officers. Every soldier must obey orders to safeguard life and property, and cannot pick and choose, saying he would obey in one case and not in another. Nor was there any intention of sending the Curragh officers to massacre Ulster Orangemen; it was rather to defend life and property from their threatened attacks. In spite of this, these officers wanted assurance in advance that they would not be sent on " active service " against Ulster, and failing such assurances they resigned their commissions. General Gough was summoned to London to explain his conduct; but instead of being court-martialled and cashiered, he was sent back to his command. The Army Council, under instructions from the Cabinet, attributed the Curragh officers' offence to a misunderstanding. And Colonel Seely, the Secretary for War, entirely on his own authority, added a written authority to General Gough and the other mutineers, that while the Government maintained their right to use the forces of the Crown to maintain law and order, in Ireland or elsewhere, they had no intention whatever of taking advantage of their right to crush political opposition to the policy or principles of the Home Rule Bill.[1]

General Gough had good reason to be well satisfied, and declared in the public press that he had a signed guarantee that he would not be sent to force Home Rule on the Ulster people. " If it came to civil war, I would fight for Ulster rather than against her." [2] In the House of Commons, Mr. Ward, a Labour member, put the issue as the army against the people. This way of putting it frightened Mr. Asquith into being valiant. He disliked censuring Colonel Seely, who was a moderate Liberal like himself; but he could not do otherwise than disapprove of his extraordinary action

[1] White Paper (copies of original documents).
[2] *Daily Telegraph*, March 25, 1914.

in giving assurances to General Gough which were not approved by the Government, but condemned by it. Colonel Seely then resigned his position, and Mr. Asquith himself became Secretary for War.[1]

But the Curragh officers remained at the Curragh, and were not sent to Ulster. The Ulster Volunteers were allowed to import German rifles in thousands, and to overcome police and customs officers and coastguards by force. Again Mr. Asquith talked by vowing that he would vindicate the law, and again he did nothing. Nor did he prevent Sir Edward Carson from bringing in more German rifles,[2] nor the Ulster Provisional Government from holding its meetings in Belfast, behind closed doors, protected by an armed guard of the Ulster Volunteers.[3]

Worse than this followed. In his speech at Bradford, Mr. Churchill was emphatic in saying that there must be equal dealing, that there must not be one law for the rich and another for the poor, one law for the orange and another for the green. But the Liberal Government had no intention of translating these words into sober reality. In the last months of 1913, Irish Nationalists were getting thoroughly alarmed. Opposition to Home Rule had assumed a sinister shape. It was organized into a military force, trained, disciplined, and armed; fierce sectarian passions were being fanned into flame; Sir Edward Carson talked of marching from Belfast to Cork; and if he did, it seemed as if he would not be opposed by the Liberal Government, or even by Mr. Redmond. Irish Nationalists began to recall the days of the Ulster Yeomanry and the horrors of 1798; and it was ominous that now, as in 1798, a Beresford and a Castlereagh—*arcades ambo*—were appealing for money and volunteers to England, to keep Irishmen in subjection as of old.[4]

In these circumstances the Irish Nationalists determined to organize a Volunteer force, and in November, 1913, a meeting was held in the Rotunda, and a beginning was made with the

[1] *Hansard*, March 26 and 27, 1914. [2] *The Times*, June 2, 1914.
[3] Meeting held July 10, 1914.
[4] Bulmer Hobson, *History of the Irish Volunteers*, p. 31.

formation of the Irish Volunteers. The force was to be open to all Irishmen, to be organized on military lines, to be defensive and protective, not provocative or menacing. Ex-soldiers, where available, were to be utilized as instructors; military efficiency was to be aimed at; but members were specially instructed to give no offence to the Ulster Volunteers.[1]

Mr. Redmond had put all his faith in Mr. Asquith's promises, and looked askance at the Volunteer movement. The Ancient Order of Hibernians, under the inspiration of Mr. Devlin, were also unfriendly. And one of Mr. Redmond's lieutenants, Mr. R. Hazelton, thought the Volunteer movement one of an ill-considered and muddle-headed character, calculated to imperil the Home Rule position.[2] Mr. Hazelton's own opinions on any subject were of little weight. He was shallow and superficial, with no political sagacity, and talents which placed him little if at all above mediocrity. But he was probably saying what Mr. Redmond felt, and indeed what Mr. Redmond's party felt; and it was significant that at no time did a single member of the Irish Party subscribe a penny to procure arms for the Volunteers.[3] In spite of these obstacles, however, the movement spread rapidly, and in July, 1914, there were 160,000 Irish Volunteers.[4]

They were good material for an army, but there was the greatest difficulty in procuring arms. Each volunteer was expected to procure for himself a rifle and a uniform. Many, however, had not the means to do this. Unlike the Orangemen, they had not behind them the rich capitalists of Belfast, nor the rich Unionist politicians of England. Some money, however, did come from individual members, and some from America; and Sir Roger Casement, who was prominent in the Volunteer movement, had influence enough to obtain the advance of a large sum from some London friends. With this money 1500 Mauser rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition were purchased, and were to be landed in Ireland on the 26th of July, 1914, half at Kilcool, in Wicklow, and half at Howth.

[1] Hobson, p. 142.
[2] Hobson, p. 102.
[3] The O'Rahilly, *The Secret History of the Volunteers.*
[4] Hobson, p. 53.

Now came the Liberal Government's exhibition of fair play—the Government which, according to Mr. Churchill, would have no distinction between orange and green. Until December, 1913, there was no obstacle placed in the way of the Ulster Volunteers. But no sooner had the Irish Volunteers been formed than a Royal Proclamation was issued forbidding the importation of arms into Ireland. The Proclamation was believed to be illegal, and as such was withdrawn in the following year.[1] Again, there was no punishment of the Orangemen for the gun-running at Larne, nor of Carson for " breaking every law ". But with mere Nationalists it was different. The yacht conveying their arms was watched by a British warship, which, however, it eluded, and the rifles and ammunition were duly landed at Howth, in spite of coast-guards and policemen. They were being conveyed to Dublin when the Volunteers were met at Clontarf by the Commissioner of Police at the head of police and soldiers. Declaring that the Volunteers were an unlawful assembly, he directed the police to seize their rifles; nor could anything have prevented serious loss of life but the patience and restraint of the Volunteer leaders. As they returned to Dublin, the King's Own Scottish Borderers were followed by a crowd, who indulged in some hissing and stone-throwing. Suddenly, without any warning, the soldiers fired upon the people, killing three and wounding thirty-eight. A Royal Commission found that the Police Commissioner, Mr. Harrell, was chiefly to blame, though the officer commanding the troops also deserved censure. As a result Mr. Harrell was deprived of his position. He was a typical Dublin Castle official, an Irishman more English than the English themselves, one of that sinister brood who have always flourished within the shadow of Dublin Castle, always ready to betray the land in which they were born.[2]

On the Home Rule question, in the meantime, a deadlock had been reached. Parliament had proved helpless to settle the question, and in July the King interposed and summoned a conference of political leaders at Buckingham Palace. The Unionists were

[1] Hobson, pp. 43–171. [2] Hobson, pp. 142–67. O'Rahilly.

represented by Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law, the Liberals by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George, the Orangemen of Ulster by Sir Edward Carson and Colonel Craig, and the Nationalists by Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon. The Speaker was in the chair. But the conference broke up after four sessions, and Mr. Asquith had to announce in the House of Commons that, on the question of the Ulster area to be excluded, they could not agree either in principle or in detail. Secrecy was imposed as to the proceedings at the conference; but it is well known that Sir Edward Carson insisted on having six Ulster counties, including Fermanagh and Tyrone, excluded from the Home Rule Bill, excluded for all time and without the option of a vote.

Any other Premier than Mr. Asquith would have then passed the Home Rule Bill and enforced it, especially as an Amending Bill embodying his concessions had been already introduced in the House of Lords, and there had been changed beyond recognition. It was plain that no concession would satisfy Sir Edward Carson and his Unionist friends, and that the strong way was the safer way for Mr. Asquith. But he would not choose it. He still wanted his Amending Bill, which the Nationalists hated and the Ulster Orangemen rejected with scorn. Declaring that Ulster must not be coerced, he gave a veto on Irish legislation to Belfast, and subscribed to the extraordinary doctrine that one-fifth of a nation might reject any law which it disliked, while the remaining four-fifths might be coerced and dragooned into submission. More extraordinary still, Mr. Redmond agreed with Mr. Asquith, protesting that the coercion of Ulster was unthinkable.

The Home Rule Bill passed without an Amending Bill. But it was accompanied by a Suspensory Bill postponing its enforcement until an Amending Bill also had been passed. On the 15th of September following, both the Home Rule Bill and the Suspensory Bill received the Royal assent. The greatest war of all time had then broken out, and Mr. Redmond, without consultation with his own people, or authority from them, pledged their full support to the Government.[1] And when the Home Rule Bill

[1] *Hansard*, Aug. 3, 1914.

received the Royal assent, his exultation was almost hysterical. Ireland, he said, had been made free, and in the House of Commons he and his friends, unable to contain themselves, sang "God Save the King".[1]

But Sir Edward Carson remained unmoved and unchanged. Even while the guns spoke and the British Empire was in deadly peril he proceeded to Belfast, accompanied by the ever-faithful Bonar Law, and in the congenial atmosphere of the Ulster Hall he poured scorn on the Home Rule Act. When the war was over, he would summon his Provisional Government and have the Home Rule Act repealed, as far as Ulster was concerned. "We have plenty of guns and we are going to keep them."[2] Mr. Bonar Law was not lacking in his assurances, and told the Orangemen that, "If the occasion arises, we shall support you to the last in any step which Sir Edward Carson and your leaders think it necessary for you to take to defend your rights".

All Mr. Redmond's foolish boasting and all the congratulations tendered to him could not obscure the meaning of all this. The Home Rule Act, tied to a Suspensory Act making it inoperative, was not worth the paper on which it was written. The Liberal gift to a dismembered Ireland neither Irish Nationalist nor Irish Orangeman wanted. The Irish Party had been betrayed; and when, a few months later, Sir Edward Carson became Attorney-General for England in Mr. Asquith's Government, the treachery of the Liberals was apparent to all the world.

[1] *Hansard*, Sept. 18, 1914. [2] Speech, Sept. 28, 1914.

CHAPTER X

The Old Order and the New

It was the great merit of Parnell that all Nationalist Ireland was attracted to the movement which he led. The constitutional Nationalist was satisfied that the weapons furnished by the constitution were used to the best advantage. And the advocates of physical force, looking to national rather than to legislative independence, felt that his ideals and methods were given them to share in the national movement. For Parnell had no love for the British Empire, nor for the British Constitution, and no objection to physical force if it could be used against his country's enemies. He would accept Home Rule, but was quite ready to strive for more as Ireland's due; and he won the applause of the physical-force men when he declared that no man could set bounds to the march of a nation.

The unity and vigour which were crowned with such success under his command gave place to weakness and failure in the years that followed, and it was a discredited party and a distrustful country which passed into the hands of Mr. Redmond from the palsied leadership of Mr. Dillon. Nor had Mr. Redmond any of the strength and vigour of Mr. Parnell, nor any of his political sagacity. He was rather of the type of Mr. Butt, but a much less commanding figure. He was eloquent, if eloquence meant saying the same thing often and saying it well. But he had little constructive capacity, no genius for detail, and no intuitive power to seize the favourable moment in party contests and passing events. Professing his belief in independent opposition, he attached himself to the English Liberals, studying their interests rather than the interests of his own party, and thought less of Ireland than he

did of the British Empire. To do much with the party he led would have required a greater man than he was. He had, however, little responsibility for the selection of the members of Parliament. He had no taste for wire-pulling, leaving such work to Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin, who were practised hands. Mr. Devlin worked through the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Mr. Dillon, with an eye to those who had most votes, regarded himself as the champion of the farmers. Both Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin were thus strongly supported, and felt safe in ignoring such bodies as the Gaelic League, the labourers, and the remnants of the old Fenians who still clung to the idea of an independent Ireland, and regarded the striving for Home Rule as a lowering of the national flag.

Continued success would have left the Irish Party immune from effective criticism. But its record since 1906 was one of almost unrelieved failure, and with failure came opposition and criticism. In the Parliamentary ranks Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Healy had already given expression to the dissatisfaction which prevailed. Others gradually followed, and many contrasted the little that Mr. Redmond accomplished with what, in the like circumstances, Mr. Parnell would have done. Certainly he would not have given serious consideration to the Councils Bill of 1907, nor have voted for the Budget of 1909. Nor would he have procured the Irish vote for Mr. Asquith in 1910 without having procured in return binding promises of a better Bill than the wretched measure of 1912. Above all, he would never have consented to the mutilation of Ireland involved in the exclusion of six Ulster counties; and if this was the last word of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George, he would have promptly turned them out of office. The Unionists were no more unfriendly than these professing Liberals, and in the year immediately preceding the Great War it was the tragic fate of Ireland that there was no Parnell to lead.

As far back as 1896, the Irish Socialist Republican Party was started by Mr. James Connolly. It was " based upon the public ownership by the people of Ireland of the land and instruments of production, distribution and exchange ", and aimed, among

other things, to nationalize the canals and railways, to establish rural depots for the best agricultural machinery, restriction of hours of labour, a minimum wage, free education, and universal suffrage.[1] Connolly was a worker himself, and knew from actual experience what poverty was. Born in Clones in 1870, he emigrated to Edinburgh in 1880, and before he had reached his twentieth year he had worked as a printer, a baker, a tramp, a navvy, a pedlar, and a dustman. He was also a student, had bought books out of his scanty earnings, and when he returned to Ireland in 1896 he was already a man of wide reading and a practised writer and speaker. Subsequently he emigrated to America, but about 1908 returned to Dublin and published his book *Labour in Irish History*.[2]

Knowing the hardships of the labouring masses, he felt pity for all those in every land who have to live the hard life of the toiler and submit to the oppressive exactions of the capitalist. The man who delved in the mine or worked for long hours on the railway train, the girl who toiled in the factory amid fetid surroundings, the man or woman whom poverty compelled to live in the city slum, and whose end, after a life of honest toil, was the workhouse and the pauper's grave, were all so many objects of his solicitude. Like Wolfe Tone, he was convinced that the connection with England was bad for Ireland, and therefore he wanted an Irish Republic, and he helped to organize and equip the Irish Brigade which fought against England in the Boer War.[3]

But while waiting for an Irish Republic, and hoping that it would some day come, he strove to improve the conditions under which the Irish workers lived. He had no confidence in either of the Irish political parties, regarding the Unionists as the party of privilege and tyranny, and the Home Ruler as little better, their policy being but "a cloak for the designs of the middle class, desirous of making terms with the Imperial Government it pretends to dislike".[4]

With the Dublin Corporation he was specially angry. If there

[1] Ryan, *The Irish Labour Movement*, pp. 148–52. [2] Ryan, pp. 153–61.
[3] Henry, *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, pp. 90–1. [4] Henry, p. 200.

was any civic virtue among its members, it would have demolished insanitary houses, compelled tenement owners to make their tenement houses habitable, and would itself build houses for the workers where the workers could live. Instead of this, nothing was done, and in 1914 it was ascertained that there were then in Dublin 20,000 one-roomed tenements, in each of which a whole family lived. There were slum houses utterly unfit for human habitation, and of some of these the owners were members of the corporation. It was the low wages and the unhealthy conditions which caused serious strikes in Dublin in 1911 and in 1913, and such strikes would again come if the yoke of capital continued to press so heavily on those who toiled.[1]

A most important recruit to the ranks of organized labour was Mr. James Larkin. Like Connolly, he knew hardship and hunger and grinding poverty. At the age of six he went to Liverpool, and before he had completed his eleventh year he had been a butcher's boy and a painter's assistant, and had tramped from Liverpool to London and Cardiff and back again to Liverpool. Subsequently he emigrated to South America, and then returning to England he worked at Liverpool and Aberdeen. He was at Belfast in 1907 and in Dublin in 1908, and in the latter year founded the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Working at any kind of work he could get, he had neither time nor money for education, and yet he bought books and read them, and both in speech and in writing had learned to express himself with ease and even with eloquence.

He was not so deep a thinker as Connolly, nor did he look so far into the future. He dealt only with the living realities around him: the employer's greed, the boss's tyranny, the long hours and low wages of the workers, the slums in which they dwelt, the poverty and squalor in which they often lived and died. His organizing capacity was considerable; and on the platform, such was his gift of fiery and impassioned eloquence that he could sway the workers as he willed. In 1911 he started *The Irish Worker*

[1] Connolly's *Labour in Ireland*, pp. 263–5, 337–40. Report of Committee on Inquiry into the Housing of Dublin Working-classes.

as the organ of the Transport Union, and with Connolly as his chief assistant he fought the workers' battle at Cork and Belfast, at Sligo and Wexford and Dublin. Liberty Hall, near the Custom House, Dublin, was his head-quarters, and from this he sent forth the message that all Irish labour should combine, that an injury to one worker is the common concern of all. This was the weapon of the sympathetic strike, with which he fought the Dublin capitalists in 1911 and 1912, and again in 1913; and though in the latter year the strikers were beaten, it was not denied that their grievances were such as might explain, if not justify, the use of the sympathetic strike as a means of redress.[1]

Nor did it help Mr. Redmond that his party had done nothing for labour, nothing to make peace between labour and capital, and that in the Dublin labour troubles of 1913 and 1914 the Unionist employer received the support of the Home Rule press.[2]

An increasing number of the educated young men of the country were ready to take sides with Larkin and Connolly rather than with Mr. Redmond. They were disgusted with the oppressive claims of capital and its alliance with militant imperialism, and they preferred the manlier Sinn Fein methods of self-reliance and self-respect to the barren subservience of Mr. Redmond's party; and they thought, with Wolfe Tone, that Ireland deserved national independence rather than the status of an English province. These young men were found in the ranks of the professional classes; some were civil servants; not a few were National teachers, or teachers in intermediate schools; many were still University students.

One of these was Sean M'Dermott, who in 1910 published the first number of a fortnightly journal called *Irish Freedom*. Taking the teachings of Wolfe Tone as his inspiration, he advocated an Irish Republic, believing that "free political institutions are an absolute essential for the future security and development of the Irish people". "We stand alone," he said, "not for an Irish Party but for national tradition, the tradition of Wolfe Tone and Emmet, of John Mitchell and John O'Leary, . . . we stand for

[1] Connolly, p. 269. Ryan, pp. 203–37. [2] Connolly, p. 327.

the complete and total separation of Ireland from England, and the establishment of an Irish Government untrammelled and uncontrolled by any other Government in the world. We stand for an Irish Republic." Not even Mr. Griffith had more attachment to the Sinn Fein teachings of self-reliance and self-sacrifice. But Mr. M'Dermott and the young Republicans who worked with him in establishing Wolfe Tone clubs for the spread of republican doctrines could never be satisfied with an Irish Parliament under an English king, and if Sinn Fein was advocated, so also was a Republic, both in the Wolfe Tone clubs and in the columns of *Irish Freedom*.[1]

A man equally earnest and much more prominent in the public life of his time than Mr. M'Dermott was Mr. Patrick Pearse. He was English by descent, and like many others so descended, he became more Irish than the Irish themselves. He got a University education and was called to the Bar; but he never practised, and does not seem to have had any taste for the law. He had strong literary tastes, lectured often, and for a time edited the Irish paper *An Claideamh Solius*, and also set up a school at Rathfarnham, of which he was the principal. For many years he was one of the most prominent figures in the Gaelic movement, and wrote both in prose and verse in Irish and English. He was something of a mystic and a good deal of a visionary and a dreamer; and his visions were chiefly of Ireland, of what she had been in the past and of what he hoped she would be in the future. The Irish language, Irish history, and Irish legends were the favourite subjects of his study; and though he was more of a scholar and a student than a man of action, he was keenly interested in passing events, and had convinced himself that speeches in Parliament would not bring freedom to Ireland. England was the enemy and must be fought.[2]

The Redmondite sole reliance on constitutional weapons, especially in face of an armed Orange Ulster, he laughed to scorn. "Mitchell", he said, "did laugh to scorn a similar but much less foolish doctrine of O'Connell's, and the generation that came after

[1] Henry, pp. 93–6. [2] Speech at Wolfe Tone's grave, June 22, 1913.

O'Connell rejected his doctrine and accepted Mitchell's. The present generation of Irish Nationalists is not only unfamiliar with arms, but despises all who are. Irish Nationalists share with certain millionaires the distinction of being the only people who believe in universal peace, here and now. . . . It is foolish of an Orangeman to believe that his personal liberty is threatened by Home Rule; but granting that he believes that it is, it is not only in the highest degree common sense, but it is his clear duty to arm in defence of his threatened liberty. Personally, I think the Orangeman with a rifle a much less ridiculous figure than the Nationalist without a rifle." He would like to see an understanding between the Orangeman and the Nationalist on the basis of a common hostility to England, the chief obstacles to such being, as he put it, the Orangeman's lack of humour and the Nationalist's lack of guns. Neither was loyal to England; why not then unite and get rid of the English. "They are the real difficulty, their presence here the real incongruity."[1]

To many other Irishmen, as well as Pearse, indeed to everybody but the purblind Parliamentarians, it was clear that the Nationalists ought to have guns, and a good beginning was made when Irish Nationalists called into existence the Irish Volunteers. The manifesto explaining the reason for such a step was written by Mr. John MacNeill, and deserves to be quoted:

"At a time when legitimate proposals, universally confessed to be of vital concern for the future of Ireland, have been put forward and are awaiting decision, a plan has been deliberately adopted by one of the great English political parties, advocated by the leaders of that party and by its numerous organs in the press, and brought systematically to bear on English public opinion, to make the display of military force and the menace of armed violence the determining factor in the future relations between this country and Great Britain.

"It is plain to every man that the people of Ireland, if they acquiesce in this new policy by their inaction, will consent to the surrender, not only of their rights as a nation, but of their civic

[1] Henry, pp. 124–7. Pearse's article in *Irish Freedom*.

rights as men. . . . Are we to rest inactive in the hope that the course of politics in Great Britain may save us from the degradation openly threatened against us? British politics are controlled by British interests and are complicated by problems of great importance to the people of Great Britain. In a crisis of this kind the duty of safeguarding our own rights is our duty first and foremost. They have rights who dare to maintain them. . . . To drill, to learn the use of arms, to acquire the habit of concerted and disciplined action, to form a citizen army from a population now at the mercy of almost any organized aggression, this is a programme that appeals to all Ireland.

" The object proposed for the Irish Volunteers is to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland. These duties will be defensive and protective, and they will not contemplate either aggression or domination. The ranks are open to all able-bodied Irishmen without distinction of creed, politics, or social grade.

" In the name of national unity, of national dignity, of national and individual liberty, and of manly citizenship we appeal to our countrymen to recognize and accept without hesitation the opportunity that has been granted them to join the ranks of the Irish Volunteers, and to make the movement now begun not unworthy of the historic title which it has adopted." [1]

This manifesto appealed to all classes of Irish Nationalists, and all classes were represented on the governing body of the Volunteers. Eoin MacNeill and Thomas MacDonagh were University professors; Pearse and M'Dermott were journalists; Colonel Moore was a soldier; Sir Roger Casement had served with distinction in the diplomatic service; Mr. T. M. Kettle, M.P., and his brother were Home Rulers of the Redmondite type. Many others were unknown men, but all were earnest in organizing resistance to Carson and his Volunteers.[2]

Although Mr. Redmond's followers were more than a third of this governing body, neither Mr. Redmond nor his party viewed the Volunteer movement with favour. The Redmondite

[1] Hobson's *History of the Irish Volunteers*, pp. 20–4. [2] Hobson, p. 19.

Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Sherlock, refused the use of the Mansion House for a Volunteer meeting, and not a single member of the Irish Party attended the inaugural meeting in the Rotunda,[1] or subscribed to Volunteer funds.[2] It was thought, and rightly, that Mr. Redmond himself was an assenting party to the Government proclamation of December, 1913, prohibiting the importation of arms. For if Mr. Redmond objected, it is difficult to see how such a proclamation could have been issued by a Government depending for its existence on his support.[3] The Volunteer movement, however, gained strength, and then it was sought to be controlled by Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon declaring that it was a great and spontaneous rising of national feeling in support of Mr. Redmond and of the policy of the Irish Party.[4] Mr. Dillon's incurable propensity for making foolish statements was well known; but this was one of the most glaring misstatements that even Mr. Dillon could have made. All the Volunteers were ready to fight for Ireland, but they were not ready to take their orders from Mr. Redmond, and had little faith in his policy.

A capable leader who thought of his country rather than of his party would have given his hearty co-operation in the enrolment and training of the Volunteers. With 200,000 of them at his back he could have defied the threats of Sir Edward Carson, and his own position would have been enormously strengthened in negotiating with shifty and treacherous politicians. But this was not Mr. Redmond's way. He sneered at the Ulster Volunteers until they became too strong to be ignored. He gave no help to the National Volunteers until they were strong enough to dispense with his assistance, and then, under threat of his opposition, he insisted that half of its governing body should be his nominees.[5] Vowing he would never consent to dismember Ireland, he consented, and in the Buckingham Palace Conference he was ready to give away four Ulster counties without consulting even the members of his own party. When war broke out, again without

[1] Hobson, pp. 25, 27. [2] O'Rahilly, *The Secret History of the Volunteers.*
[3] Hobson, p. 19. [4] Hobson, pp. 44–5: Speech at Ballaghadereen, June 4, 1914.
[5] Hobson, pp. 117–27, 134–5.

consulting his party, he told the Government that they could withdraw their troops from Ireland and that the country would be defended from foreign invasion by co-operation between the Ulster and National Volunteers.[1] He stipulated for nothing, made no bargain, gave everything, and got nothing in return. He was generous at the expense of Ireland, forgetting the words of Grattan, that a nation can no more be generous of its liberty than a woman of her honour. In the House of Commons he was rewarded with a few approving cheers, and flattered because Sir Edward Grey declared that Ireland was the one bright spot in a situation that was dark. A month later Mr. Redmond got the Home Rule Act on the Statute Book, with a Suspensory Act attached, and for this he was in ecstasies and told the whole world that Ireland had got a great charter of freedom.[2]

In spite of the character of the Home Rule Act, and of its indefinite postponement by the Suspensory Act, Mr. Redmond declared that the democracy of Great Britain had kept faith with Ireland, and that now it was a duty of honour for Ireland to keep faith with them. "The Empire is engulfed in the most serious war in history. It is a war for the defence of the sacred rights and liberties of small nations . . . and Ireland would be false to her history if she did not willingly bear her share in its burdens and its sacrifices." Not content with having Irish Volunteers defend their own land at home against foreign invasion, he wanted the Irish Volunteers also to fight against the Germans in the field. "This war is undertaken in defence of the highest interests of religion and morality and right. . . . I say to you, therefore, your duty is twofold . . . go on drilling and making yourselves efficient for the work, and then account for yourselves as men, not only in Ireland itself, but wherever the firing-line extends, in defence of right, of freedom, and religion in this war."[3]

The answer to this and all such appeals was not such as Mr. Redmond expected. On the one hand, Southern Unionists, who hated Home Rule, joined the Volunteers and hastened to acclaim

[1] *Hansard*, Aug. 3, 1914. [2] Manifesto to the Irish people, Sept. 17, 1914.
[3] Speech at Woodenbridge, Sept. 20, 1914.

the loyalty of Mr. Redmond. On the other hand, Carson wanted no co-operation with him. He and his Ulster Volunteers would treat the Home Rule Act as a nullity, and when the war was over would have it repealed. Meanwhile, he defied the Government to enforce it.[1] As to the National Volunteers, Mr. Redmond's nominees on the governing body were ready to follow him. The others declined to serve abroad, and if they were to be armed for home defence, and serve the Government as such, they must be armed and equipped at the Government's expense.[2]

These stipulations would not be accepted by the War Office, and were distasteful to Mr. Redmond, and after his Woodenbridge speech a split in the Volunteer ranks was inevitable. The blame was put on Mr. Redmond, and not without reason, and in a manifesto issued by his opponents it was objected that he had " announced for the Volunteers a policy and a programme fundamentally at variance with their own published and accepted aims ". Mr. Redmond had done this without consulting either the Volunteers or the people of Ireland. He was therefore no longer entitled to the support of the Volunteers, and those who signed this manifesto repudiated him and his policy. Among them were Eoin MacNeill, The O'Rahilly, Pearse, M'Dermott, and others—the men who had set the Volunteer movement on foot.[3]

Henceforth these were called Irish Volunteers, ready to defend their own country at home, but having no quarrel with Germany, and not ready to fight on foreign fields for the British Empire, which refused their country any rule but the rule of Dublin Castle. As such they were distrusted by the Government, and treated as its enemies. Those, on the contrary, who took Mr. Redmond's view, and were ready to follow his lead, were satisfied with the Home Rule Act and were regarded as friends by the Government. These were called National Volunteers.

Nor could there be, at the opening of the war, any doubt that when Mr. Redmond pledged his support he had the majority of Irish Nationalists at his back. Almost immediately after the prorogation of Parliament, Mr. Asquith came to Dublin and

[1] Speech at Ballymena, Oct. 1, 1914. [2] Hobson, p. 189. [3] Hobson, pp. 200–2.

addressed a great recruiting meeting at the Mansion House, having with him on the same platform Mr. Redmond, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Devlin. Mr. Asquith asked for the freewill offering of a free people, as if the Home Rule Act were a charter of freedom and already in force. And he promised the National Volunteers who would join that they would be formed into an Irish Brigade under their own officers. Mr. Redmond seconded his appeal, and Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin approved; and British and Irish loyalty were blended when the meeting sang with equal fervour "God save Ireland" and "God save the King".[1]

A little later Mr. Dillon proclaimed his enthusiasm for the Empire and for the war, and vigorously assailed those troublesome Sinn Feiners and Gaelic Leaguers who were interfering with recruiting.[2] Mr. Redmond renewed his protestations of loyalty and gratitude at Kilkenny.[3] And the enthusiasm of both was increased when Mr. Asquith declared: "We shall not sheath the sword until the rights of the smaller nations are placed on an unassailable foundation."[4]

As many as 51,000 of the National Volunteers were thus attracted into the army, and in the desperate battles of the Great War they fought well, believing that in fighting for the British Empire they were fighting for Irish freedom. When they left home for the military training-camps they were usually accompanied by cheering crowds; their towns and villages read with pride of their heroic deeds abroad; and when they returned, maimed and broken, they were the objects of the tenderest solicitude. Thousands never returned, for they fell where they fought and never again saw Ireland.

Had the English in the war been the allies of Germany, as they so often had been in the past, there would certainly have been less enthusiasm in Ireland for the Allied cause. But there was an old friendship between France and Ireland. They had fought together on many a bloody field, at Aughrim, at Landen, at

[1] Speeches at the Mansion House, Sept. 25, 1914.
[2] Speech at Ballaghadereen, Oct. 4, 1914. [3] Speech, Oct. 18, 1914.
[4] Speech at the Guildhall, Nov. 10, 1914.

Fontenoy, and they had always fought together against England. There was an old friendship, too, with Belgium, where, in centuries long past, Irish missioners had laboured, and where, in the penal times, so many Irish students found a home in the sheltering cloisters of Louvain. Nor had Irishmen any love for Germany. The only German soldiers she knew were the Hessian mercenaries, hired by England in 1798, and whose savageries rivalled those of the Ulster Yeomanry or the Ancient Britons. Germany was the country of Luther, the home of the English Hanoverian kings, not one of whom except Edward VII had a particle of sympathy for Ireland. Prussia ruled Germany, and Ireland disliked Prussian arrogance and Prussian insolence; and she disliked the Kaiser talking in the twentieth century of his shining sword and of the divine right of kings. Further, the Irish, at the beginning of the war, believed the tales of the German atrocities in Belgium, the butcheries of the innocent, the desecration of churches, the outraging of nuns, and, believing these things, they thought it right to range themselves on the side of England.

Nationalists, indeed, bitterly resented the attempt to partition Ireland, and Mr. Redmond's acquiescence in such a scheme; but they were ready to believe him when he said he had done his best, and that partition would be but temporary. They believed him when he said Home Rule was safe, as it was already on the Statute Book. Not having studied the Act, they believed him when he said it was a great charter of freedom. They believed him because his party was a constitutional one, working by constitutional means rather than by physical force, which they thought would be helpless against the disciplined armies of a powerful Empire.

At that date Sinn Fein was but imperfectly understood. Its financial resources were limited, its press ill-supported, its organization weak. In the years following 1910 it could make no appeal to the people, eagerly and confidently expecting an Irish Parliament. Its influence grew in 1914 with the growth of the Volunteer movement; but even at the outbreak of the war it had made little progress, and was in no condition to challenge Mr. Redmond.

Yet Mr. Redmond's party was losing ground. Nor could it

be otherwise when its constant and repeated failures were recalled. The Budget of 1910, the Insurance Act, the Home Rule Act, with its Suspensory Act, were but poor achievements, and it was not enough to tell the country, as it was told so often by Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon—the twin sentinels on the watch-tower—that all was well. The Irish Party had kept the Liberals in office for years, and had nothing to show to their own country but empty hands. Sir Edward Carson and not Mr. Redmond had succeeded, and instead of punishment for all the trouble he caused in Ulster, he was, in May, 1915, rewarded with a seat in Mr. Asquith's Cabinet.

The reason given for this extraordinary step was that the Government required the co-operation of all parties in its heavy task of carrying on the war. Hence an office in the Cabinet was offered to Sir Edward Carson, and one also to Mr. Redmond, which, however, he refused. Carson accepted and became Attorney-General for England. Thus the man who defied all law, and gloried in doing so, was given charge of Government legal proceedings. His Volunteers, his drillings and parades, his Mausers and machine-guns, and his constant defiance of Government led the Germans to believe that all Ulster was aflame and Ireland on the brink of civil war, and so hurried Europe and the world into war. And now the man who did all this was to judge of those who were rebels and to prosecute them.[1]

Henceforth opposition to the Irish Party gained strength. The Sinn Feiners had already denounced partition in vigorous terms. "God has fixed Ireland's frontiers, and they would not be altered while the sea rises and falls."[2] The Young Republicans vowed that no slice would be carved out of Ireland to be handed over to England, and James Connolly wrote in the same strain. The Irish workers had then organized the Citizen Army, independent of either the Irish or the National Volunteers, and the Citizen Army would have an Ireland, orange and green, one and indivi-

[1] "The raising of the Ulster Army by Sir Edward Carson was reputed by the German spies as a real and serious revolutionary movement, and of course it was believed by the Germans that Ireland would rise in rebellion the moment war was declared."—Gerard, *My Five Years in Germany*.

[2] *Sinn Fein*, 1914.

sible.[1] The Irish Volunteers, having broken away from Mr. Redmond's friends, resolved in convention in November, 1914, that no man could offer up the blood and lives of the sons of Irishmen and Irishwomen to the services of the British Empire while no National Government which could act and speak for the people of Ireland is allowed to exist.

By that time the only Nationalist trusted by the Government was the Irish Party, and the only government allowed in Ireland was the old discredited government of Dublin Castle. And Dublin Castle, true to its character, regarded Sinn Feiners and Young Republicans and the workers of Liberty Hall as being all disloyal. As such, all their papers were suppressed. In 1915 a new batch of papers shared the same fate. *The Irish Worker*, however, printed in Glasgow, continued to circulate in Dublin, and a new Sinn Fein paper called *Nationality* appeared in Dublin in the summer of 1915, and was grudgingly tolerated by the Government, though it was certainly regarded with suspicion.

The Irish Party made no effective protest against the suppression of these Nationalist papers. Its members drew their salaries and did nothing in Parliament. Its leaders, Messrs. Redmond, Dillon, and Devlin, continued in favour with English Ministers, and were often the guests of their special friend, Mr. Lloyd George. Nor could any good be expected from a party of which the leading Irish Nationalist newspaper wrote: "The whole tone of Irish public life has become corrupted by the universal scramble for jobs." Job-hunting, it added, had reached deplorable limits.[2]

When this article was written, a Coalition Government was in office, and if the Irish Party got salaried offices from a Government which included Sir Edward Carson, Lord Curzon, Lord Milner, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. F. E. Smith, and Mr. Campbell, then indeed the Irish Party had fallen low. Lord Milner was a reactionary of the most intolerant type, and had highly commended the officers who had mutinied at the Curragh.[3] Lord Curzon was one of those superior persons who disdainfully regarded all democrats as unfit

[1] Henry, pp. 148–9. [2] *Irish Independent*, Aug. 25, 1915.
[3] Speech in the House of Lords, March 13, 1914.

company for a gentleman, and told his fellow-members of the Primrose League that their duty was to support those who were so bravely fighting the battle of the Union in Ireland.[1] Mr. Campbell was a mere place-hunting lawyer, with no political convictions and no ambition except to reach the judicial bench. Mr. Smith was a worse type, and was derisively called "Galloper Smith", because he had been a galloper in Carson's Ulster army. Finally, Mr. Bonar Law was an unimaginative and rather dull reactionary, and in everything followed the lead of Sir Edward Carson as faithfully as Sancho Panza followed Don Quixote. A Coalition Government including such men in its highest offices deserved no support, or even toleration, from Irish Nationalists. Yet the Irish leaders clung to the Government, and got favours from it. Because they did, they lost ground at home, and every day they supported the Coalition added to their unpopularity.

Recruiting was a serious cause of trouble. To fight for an Empire which was fighting for small nations was intelligible, but ceased to be so if that Empire could easily give freedom to its own small nation, Ireland, and obstinately refused to do so. There was discrimination also in the treatment given to the Ulster and the Irish National Volunteers. The Orangemen were placed under Ulster officers and could carry their own Ulster flags, and the English press was ready on all occasions to magnify their deeds. On the other hand, in spite of Mr. Asquith's promise that the National Volunteers who joined would be formed into an Irish Brigade, this was not done. Lord Kitchener, an anti-Irish Irishman, would have none of it. The Irish Nationalists who joined must not have their national flags or banners, or their national songs; and when they covered themselves with glory in some desperate battle, their army officers made no mention of their valour. The selection of the recruiting officers employed in Ireland also was unfortunate. Belonging usually to the landlord class, and to the army, they were often unpopular, and sometimes they were not even sober. The combined effect of all these things was that enthusiasm for the war in Nationalist circles cooled down. Carson and Bonar Law as

[1] New Year's message, Jan. 2, 1914.

champions of small nations only excited ridicule. The published tales of German atrocities ceased to be believed. Mr. Asquith and his Ministers were thoroughly distrusted. The soldier returned from the war dissuaded those at home from joining; and the more energetic among the younger Irishmen were rapidly leaving Mr. Redmond and his party and were passing over to the ranks of Sinn Fein.

Nor were the Sinn Feiners of 1916 the same as those of Mr. Griffith's earlier years. Although Mr. Griffith ignored the British Parliament, he was ready to use constitutional weapons and was not anxious to rely on physical force. His new disciples, mostly young men and republican in spirit, thought it well to use the opportunities furnished by a great war, and were ready to welcome the assistance of England's enemies for the attainment of Irish freedom. Distrustful of all English politicians and of the Irish Party leaders, they wanted no more Parliamentary action, no making of Irish independence a matter of sale and barter. They turned to Emmet and Wolfe Tone for their ideals, and in a series of Tracts for the Times they proceeded to propagate their views. Men like Mr. Sheehy Skeffington denounced recruiting for the army, and were prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Act. Sir Roger Casement had already gone to Berlin, and had got an assurance from the German Foreign Office that " if the fortunes of war should ever bring German troops to the coast of Ireland, they would land there not as an army of invaders coming to rob or destroy, but as the fighting forces of a Government inspired by goodwill towards a land and a people for whom Germany only wishes national prosperity and national freedom ".[1]

But if there was to be an appeal to physical force, there must be unity and preparation at home. Without such it were useless to have an armed force from Germany, and still less could anything be accomplished by the Irish unassisted by foreign troops. An alliance of the Ulster, National, and Irish Volunteers, could it have been secured, would be truly formidable. But the Orangemen wanted Protestant ascendancy, and were quite satisfied as

[1] Henry, pp. 190–3, 198–9.

long as their leader, Sir Edward Carson, ruled the British Empire. The National Volunteers were so wedded to constitutional means that they were useless as a fighting force, and preferred to continue faithful to Mr. Redmond. There remained only the Irish Volunteers, with whom Mr. Pearse was so prominently identified, and the Citizen Army, at the head of which was James Connolly.

So far these had kept aloof, and only the combined influence of Pearse and Connolly brought them together. Connolly had no faith in the British Parliament, and just as little in the Irish Party. He was disheartened by the collapse of the Dublin strike in 1914 and by the victory of the capitalists, and he despaired of effecting any great change by a fresh strike. No doubt rebellion would fail, but it would at least call attention to the workers' grievances, to their low wages, and to the slums in which they lived, which were a disgrace to any civilized city. Some change might come, and even that was worth the shedding of blood.

Pearse was an idealist. Had he thought only of his worldly interests he would have practised his profession, or turned to journalism, where he would certainly have acquired eminence. Nor did he in his school at Rathfarnham aim at mere successes at examinations. His aim was " to foster the elements of character native to a soul, to help these to their full perfection rather than to implant exotic excellences ". For the educational system of ancient Ireland he had unbounded enthusiasm. It was " the best that had ever been known among men ". It developed individuality, inspired love and sacrifice and unselfishness, with the inspiration that made Cuchullan a hero and St. Columba a saint.

By contrast, he had for the modern system of education in Ireland nothing but words of loathing and scorn. Sprung from an English source and fed upon English ideals, it aimed at having all conform to a type. It was a murder machine, a machine for murdering Irish souls, " a machine vast and complicated, with a multitude of far-reaching arms, with many ponderous presses carrying out mysterious and long-drawn-out processes of shaping

and moulding. It could not make men but it could break them. It seizes upon the raw human material in Ireland, rends and compresses and remoulds it, and what it cannot refashion after the regulation pattern it rejects, with all likeness of its former self crushed out of it." [1]

A man with such abhorrence of English ideals, and whose gaze was ever turned to the past of the country in which he lived and in which he was born, could not be insensible to the memories that clustered round the house in which he lived at Rathfarnham. It was called The Hermitage, and there Emmet spent some of his last days. In the room in which Pearse worked Emmet had also worked and thought; outside in the garden was Emmet's Vine; through the wood was Emmet's Walk, where he often walked with Sarah Curran; " and at an angle of our boundary wall there is a little fortified lodge called Emmet's Fort ".[2] Nor had Emmet himself a more passionate devotion to Ireland than Pearse had, nor a greater readiness to sacrifice everything, even life itself if need be, in her cause.

Pearse was as convinced as Wolfe Tone that Ireland could never be happy or prosperous until she was free, and he quoted Wolfe Tone's words and adopted them as his own. " To subvert the tyranny of an execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means." [3] Tone was no doctrinaire Republican, and neither was Pearse, but both wanted national independence. Tone, however, acknowledged that he was led to this by a hatred of England " so deeply rooted in my nature that it was rather an instinct than a principle ".

Pearse was too lovable and kindly to share Tone's intense

[1] *The Murder Machine* (pamphlet). [2] *How does she Stand?*
[3] *The Separatist Idea.*

hatred of England; but he shared his hatred of oppression and misgovernment as he shared his love of freedom. Hence he had such admiration for Davis and Mitchel and Lalor, all powerful advocates of Irish independence; and his approval of Davis in the following passage shows how far he wished to go. "Now, Englishmen," said Davis, "listen to this. Though you were to give us to-morrow the best tenures on earth, to give us the amplest representation in your Senate, to restore our absentees, to disencumber us of our debt and redeem every one of our fiscal wrongs, and in addition plundered the treasures of the world to lay gold at our feet, still we tell you in the name of enthusiastic hearts, thoughtful souls, and fearless spirits, we tell you by the past, the present, and the future we would spurn your gifts if the condition were that Ireland should remain a province." [1]

Connolly was not a poet, as Pearse was, and he was less of a visionary and a dreamer. He dealt with hard facts and stern realities, especially with the conditions in which the worker toiled and lived; his long hours of labour, his scanty wages, his fetid surroundings, his often cheerless and comfortless home. For such terms as freedom and humanity and Ireland, apart from Irish men and Irish women, he had scant respect. "Ireland," he said, "as distinct from her people is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland, and can yet pass unmoved through our streets, and witness all the wrong, the shame, and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland—brought by Irishmen upon Irish men and Irish women—without burning to end it, is, in my opinion, a fraud and a liar, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call Ireland." Not at once, but gradually, did he come to accept Tone's teaching, and then he felt convinced that the best way to better the Irish labourer's lot was to have complete Irish freedom. Then his Nationalism became so pronounced and emphatic that his friends and followers complained that "the high creed of Irish Nationalism became his daily rosary, while the higher creed of international humanity

[1] *The Spiritual Nation.*

that had so long bubbled from his eloquent lips was silent for ever ".[1]

When this stage was reached in Connolly's mental development agreement with Pearse was easy, the barriers between them had disappeared. Both agreed that Irish independence was necessary for Ireland, and must be fought for with the shedding of blood. The Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers would strike together, and Ireland would be proclaimed a Republic, with Pearse its first President and Connolly commander of its army.

[1] Henry's *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, pp. 200–1.

CHAPTER XI

The Rebellion of Easter Week

In 1914 the Irish leaders had so closely allied themselves with the Liberals, that co-operation with the Tories on any subject had become impossible. They had become the mere camp followers of the Liberal leaders, fearful to offend them, ready to vote for all their measures, thankful that they had got a salary of £400 a year, and procuring day after day salaried offices for their friends. Instead of supporting the Irish Volunteers Mr. Redmond acquiesced in the Government proclamation of December, 1913, against the importation of arms. He sneered at the Volunteer movement until it became strong, and then insisted on getting control of it; though he made no serious effort to arm or equip it. When rifles were landed in Howth the demand made by Mr. Redmond's friends was, that these rifles should be sent to the Ulster Hibernians for service against the Carsonites. But there was no request for ammunition, and rifles without ammunition were of little use. When the split came towards the end of 1914, Mr. Redmond's National Volunteers remained in favour with the Government, but the Irish Volunteers became suspected, because they would not fight for England. Mr. Redmond approved, and when Nationalist papers were suppressed and raids on houses were made, he uttered no word of protest.[1]

Nor had he a word of protest against the treatment of some young boys from Connaught at the hands of a Liverpool mob. Volunteers for the war were not coming forward in England in sufficient numbers and there was talk of conscription; and no

[1] O'Rahilly, *The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers.*

doubt these Irish lads were reluctant to fight England's battle, especially an England which continued Dublin Castle government and resolutely refused to give Ireland Home Rule. If these boys went to America they were merely exercising their legal right; and yet they were set upon by a mob in Liverpool, hunted through the streets, prevented from taking their passage on board ship, and in many cases had to return home.

It remained for Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, to give voice to the indignation in Ireland. "The treatment which the poor Irish emigrant lads have received at Liverpool is enough to make any Irishman's blood boil with anger and indignation. They are supposed to be freemen, but they are made to feel that they are prisoners who may be compelled to lay down their lives for a cause that is not worth three rows of pins to them. Small nationalities and the wrongs of Belgium, that rouse the enthusiasm of the Irish Party but do not get enough of recruits in England are far too high-flying for uneducated peasants, and it seems a cruel wrong to attack them because they cannot rise to the level of the disinterested imperialism of Mr. T. P. O'Connor and the rest of the new Brigade. . . . Their crime is that they are not ready to die for England. Why should they? What have they or their forbears ever got from England that they should die for her? Mr. Redmond will say a Home Rule Act on the Statute Book. But any intelligent Irishman will say a simulacrum of Home Rule with an express notice that it is never to come into operation."[1]

Thousands of Irishmen had then died in the war, and they fought and died as Irish soldiers know how to fight and die. In the retreat from Mons, for instance, the Munster Fusiliers fought till their ammunition was spent. The Connaught Rangers charged the Germans "after saying a prayer to the Mother of God to be merciful to their loved ones at home if they should fall". At Suvla Bay the Irish were slaughtered before they could land, the waters around them running red with their blood. Yet the anti-Irish Irishman, Admiral de Robeck had not a word about them

[1] Letter dated Nov. 10, 1915.

in his despatches.[1] In one week the Connaught Rangers had lost 521 out of 1100, and in other divisions it was a similar tale. And after all this and more had happened, and more than a year of war had passed, it had to be recorded that " practically nobody in Ireland or in England has heard of the gallant deeds of the Irish regiments in the present war ".[2]

The British commanders whose ignorance and incompetence excited the derision of French and German generals were quite ready to praise English and Scottish regiments for their valorous deeds, but had not a word to say for Irish valour. Yet, because Irish boys from Connaught preferred to go to America to serving in such an army and under such leaders, they were hooted and hissed and hunted down by a Liverpool mob, and not a word of protest came from Mr. Redmond or Mr. Dillon.

The fact was that Mr. Redmond had completely lost touch with Irish public opinion. Most of his time he lived in London; in Ireland he met only his own supporters, not infrequently his own sycophants; and even Mr. Birrell describes his speech in Parliament at the opening of the war as a British rather than an Irish speech. He had no authority from Ireland to make any such offer as he made; and Mr. Asquith's surrender to Sir Edward Carson, and his willingness to dismember Ireland, ought to have warned Mr. Redmond that every living Irishman might shed his blood for England, and yet Ireland would not get anything in return. Not content with offering the Volunteers for the service of England at home, he urged on recruiting platforms that they should fight for England abroad. He was satisfied with the Home Rule Act, though it was not to be enforced; and when the National reservists and militiamen in Belfast and Derry proposed to refuse joining the Colours unless and until the Home Rule Act became operative, Mr. Redmond implored them to make no conditions, and sent them to die in Flanders.[3]

Mr. Redmond was quite flattered to stand on the same recruiting platforms as the Viceroy. Even the existence of a Coal-

[1] Kerr, *What the Irish Regiments have Done*, p. 149.
[2] Kerr, p. 23. [3] O'Rahilly, pp. 14–5.

ition Government, with Carson as one of its chief members, did not damp his zeal. He went to France in November, 1915, to visit the British army, addressed the Irish regiments, saw the hospitals, and the wonderful work of the intelligence Department, lunched with the chief commanders, fired a monster naval gun at the Germans, hoping " that his shot went home ", and gushed with admiration " of every branch of our army ". All this time Messrs. Redmond, Dillon, and Devlin were in constant consultation with Mr. Birrell and with Sir M. Nathan, the Under-Secretary. These Irish leaders knew everything, had a share in all Government appointments, tolerated, if they did not approve of the persecution of some of the Volunteer leaders, and would willingly have disarmed the Volunteers if they did not fear public opinion.[1]

Meantime Connolly had written his *Reconquest of Ireland*, and Pearse and others the *Tracts for the Times*. Pearse was laying it down as dogmatically as Wolfe Tone that Ireland could not be happy till she was free, and therefore she must be separated from England. " Separation from England is necessary not only to the happiness and prosperity, but almost to the continued existence of Ireland, inasmuch as the interests of Ireland and England are fundamentally at variance." [2] Like Mitchel he did not hate " England or Englishmen ", but he hated " English commercialism supported by English militarism, a thing wholly bad ".[3]

With the *Freeman's Journal* defending everything the Irish Party did; with the *Independent* always unfriendly to labour, and with their own papers suppressed, or at best living on sufferance, it was not easy for Pearse and Connolly to reach the people. But they reached many and made many converts; they agreed in thinking that Parliamentary action was an antiquated weapon; and that it was their duty to enrol Volunteers, and drill and arm them. " A prostitute press, a heaven-sent leader, and a friendly Government are undoubtedly a fairly strong combine; still it will

[1] Evidence of Mr. Birrell and Sir M. Nathan before the Hardinge Commission. [2] *The Separatist Idea.* [3] *The Sovereign People.*

take more than that to break the spirit of the Irish Volunteers."[1] They were indeed increasing in numbers; they had their rifles and machine-guns, their parades and their route-marches; their leaders, educated and enthusiastic, were studying books on tactics and strategy; and if the foreign aid sought by Casement did come, these Irishmen, aiming at national independence and ready to die for it, would not be vanquished without a desperate struggle.

Mr. Birrell enumerated the various causes which led to the Rebellion. There was, he said, especially among the educated young men, a passionate desire, expressed in prose and poetry and the drama, for a separate national existence. There were doubts that Home Rule would never come. There was disgust at the ineptitude of the Redmond and Dillon leadership, and especially at Mr. Redmond's speech at the opening of the war. It was doubtful how long the war would last and how it would end. Finally, Carson's inclusion in the Cabinet was certain proof that Ireland might get abundance of repression from England but would never get her freedom.[2]

Mr. T. M. Healy gave some additional reasons. The denial in official despatches of all recognition of the deeds of Irish regiments killed recruiting and generated profound disgust in the minds of the people. The stoppage of all grants to Ireland, while such were continued in Great Britain, hampered and irritated local bodies. There was neither confidence in the Irish leaders nor respect for them. They had declared they would not accept the salary of £400, but they had all accepted. They declared against seeking for Government offices, but every salaried office was being filled by their nominees. Their press organ, the *Freeman's Journal*, was sending a continued stream of its writers into Government offices. In the Ancient Order of Hibernians every man expected a job. Finally, Dublin Castle remained, as unrepresentative, as reactionary, and as fiercely anti-national as in the darkest days of Irish history. Nor could anything be expected from the Coalition Cabinet. Occupied

[1] O'Rahilly, *The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers.*
[2] Evidence before the Hardinge Commission.

with so many questions in the government of a world-wide empire, Ireland was ignored. Mr. Birrell could do nothing at Cabinet meetings but keep shouting like a jackdaw: "Ireland, Ireland", and apparently he did not shout loud enough and long enough to make any impression.[1]

Pearse and his friends have often been charged with receiving German gold, but not a particle of evidence has been produced in support of this charge. They did, however, receive money from America; but it must have come by hand, as the Government spies were unable to trace it. With this money the Volunteers bought rifles, sometimes from soldiers, sometimes in England from English merchants, who were quite ready to sell even to Irish rebels. Thus were they provided with arms, rifles and a few machine-guns; and Sir M. Nathan estimates that in April, 1916, the Citizen Army numbered about 3000 and the Volunteers about 13,000, of whom about 2000 were in Dublin. Further arms were expected from Germany, and in April a German vessel disguised as a Norwegian, with a cargo of 20,000 rifles, some ammunition, and machine-guns, and with a German submarine in attendance, started for Ireland. Casement was on board the submarine. But the vessel was captured by the English and towed into Cork; and Casement and two others were put aboard a collapsible boat and landed in Kerry, where Casement was soon captured. The submarine sank herself rather than fall into English hands; and the rifles, machine-guns and ammunition destined for Ireland found a resting-place at the bottom of the Atlantic.

By this time the Irish Government, on the one hand, and the Volunteers and Citizen Army on the other, had determined to strike, and the inevitable conflict was at hand. At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation, on the 15th of April, a circular was read by Alderman T. Kelly, purporting to be issued by the Commander of the Forces in Ireland, and announcing that all the leaders of Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers, and of the Gaelic League would be arrested and their premises raided. The arrests and raids would be made by the troops, the police being con-

[1] Mr. T. M. Healy, Article in *Sunday Times*, May 21, 1916.

fined to barracks, and nothing was required to put the military in motion but the sanction of the Chief Secretary. This order was described by the Government as a forgery; but the evidence at the Hardinge Commission showed that it was quite in keeping with the wishes of the chiefs of the Irish Government. The Government spies had been on the track of the Volunteers, whom even Mr. Birrell thought dangerous. Mr. Redmond scoffed at them, without a policy and without leaders. Mr. Dillon, however, disliked the Volunteers, and thought them dangerous, and was quite ready to have them prosecuted if it could be shown that they were in communication with Germany.

Lord Wimborne, the Viceroy, suggested deporting the Sinn Fein leaders in 1915, and was evidently alarmed. After Casement's arrest he again took the matter up as one that did not brook delay. On Easter Sunday he urged that Liberty Hall and the Sinn Fein arsenals should be raided, and wrote to Mr. Birrell for his sanction. But Mr. Birrell and General Friend, the Commander of the Forces, were absent in England, and the Under-Secretary objected that such raids would be illegal. Further, the danger of rebellion seemed to have passed, for Mr. MacNeill, the Volunteer Chief of the Staff, issued an order prohibiting the prescribed manœuvres for Easter Monday. Pearse and Connolly, however, thought that the time had come for action, as suppression would certainly be attempted, and it was better to anticipate this. A council of leaders was held on Easter Sunday night, and by a majority of one, the militants carried the day. The following morning being Easter Monday, the Volunteers and the Citizen Army combined and went into open rebellion.

The plan was to seize by a simultaneous attack the chief buildings of the city, especially the Government buildings and the railway stations, and to occupy positions which commanded the approaches to the city. It was all-important to hold the telegraph and telephone offices, so that communication with England and the inland centres might be cut off. It was equally important to hold the railway stations and the chief roads through which troops might come from the Curragh or elsewhere: and the moral

effect of capturing Dublin Castle, the seat of government, would be considerable. And it was vital that the rebels should have strong central positions so that they could stand a siege. All the better if these buildings commanded a wide view enabling the occupants to see the enemy advance, and sweep the streets through which he advanced with rifle fire.

Details had been worked out carefully. It had been usual for bands of volunteers, armed and in uniform, to parade the streets and go out for route-marches into the country; and when several bands of volunteers were seen in the streets on Easter Monday in military formation and under their officers, it excited no surprise. Suddenly, as the clock struck twelve, a body of armed men, mostly in uniform, marched up O'Connell Street from the Rotunda, and then, wheeling to the right, entered the General Post Office, turned all the officials out, and took possession of the whole building. Windows and doors were then barricaded, and with food commandeered from the neighbouring hotels the rebels settled down to withstand the inevitable siege. This was made the head-quarters of the insurgent army, Pearse being in chief and Connolly second in command. Here also was the O'Rahilly and some young girls to cook for the soldiers and to nurse the wounded.

An hour after the Post Office was occupied the British flag was hauled down, and the tricolour flag of the Irish Republic took its place. At the same time the following proclamation was issued:

" The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic.

" Irishmen and Irishwomen. In the name of God and of the dead generations from whom she receives her old traditions of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom. Having organized and trained her manhood, through her secret revolutionary organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organization, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having partially perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal herself, she now seizes that moment

and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first place on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

"We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of the right by a foreign people and Government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished, except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted this right to national freedom and sovereignty. Six times during the past 300 years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right, and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a sovereign, independent state, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades in arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

"The Irish Republic is entitled to and hereby claims the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees civil and religious liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien Government which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

"Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent national Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland, and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government hereby constituted will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

"We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the most High God, whose blessing we invoke on our arms, and we pray that no one who serves the cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common

good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

" Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government:—

" Thomas J. Clarke,
Sean MacDiarmada,
P. H. Pearse,
James Connolly,
Thomas MacDonagh,
Eamonn Ceannt,
Joseph Plunkett."[1]

Concurrently with these events at the Republican headquarters, another body of armed men had marched into Stephen's Green, closed and barricaded the gates, and dug trenches and occupied them. And they also occupied the College of Surgeons, as well as the corner houses of the streets leading to the Green. The Four Courts building was also occupied, as also the Broadstone, Westland Row, and Harcourt Street railway stations, though the latter, being considered useless, was soon abandoned. Boland's Bakery at Ringsend was also occupied. It commanded the approaches to the Grand Canal, and it was useful as a food depot. The rebels also took possession of the South Dublin Union. They made no attempt, however, to capture the Bank of Ireland or Trinity College, and they failed to capture Kingsbridge and Amiens Street stations, or the Magazine in the Phœnix Park. They attempted, but failed, to blow up the railway bridges on the Circular Road, and they failed to capture Dublin Castle. Here the want of effective explosives was felt, as the closed gates might have been easily blown to pieces. Had this been done the whole place would have fallen into their hands, as the garrison was small and the Viceroy and military officers were absent at the Fairyhouse Races.

Possession of the General Post Office with the telegraph was of great importance; but a fatal mistake was the neglect to capture the Telephone Exchange; and the fact that Trinity College was

[1] O'Boyle's *The Irish Rebellion of* 1916.

in the hands of the enemy seriously hampered their communications with Stephen's Green and Westland Row. It was specially unfortunate also that the rebels were unable to capture Dublin Castle, for possession of the seat of government would have had a great moral effect throughout the country.

Mr. MacNeill's circular prohibiting the marches arranged for Easter threw the Government officials off their guard, and on the other hand was responsible for the smallness of the number who broke out into rebellion. It is impossible to say what was the exact number, certainly not 3000, probably not half that amount. It was a force entirely unequal to the task of holding and defending a large city, and explains why neither Trinity College nor Dublin Castle were captured, and why so many points, being inadequately defended, fell into the enemy's hands. The want of proper explosives prevented the destruction of the railway bridges crossing the North Circular Road and the Cabra Road, and the barricades erected near Phibsborough were easily demolished by the artillery fire of the troops as they advanced into the heart of the city. Liberty Hall was demolished by the warship *Helgar* coming up the Liffey, and the troops at Portobello soon overcame the rebel resistance at Portobello Bridge. They then advanced through Richmond Street and Camden Street; but their progress was slow, as they were met with rifle fire from the roof of Jacob's Factory. The Four Courts position was held because the military authorities were unwilling to assail it with shells which would destroy it. For a similar reason the rebels were able to hold out for days in the South Dublin Union.

A desperate struggle took place at Mount Street Bridge. In this quarter Mr. De Valera was in charge, with his head-quarters in Boland's Bakery in Grand Canal Street, and his men, about a hundred in number, holding various positions about the dock. Westland Row terminus and the railway line as far as Lansdowne Road station were also held, the rails having been partly torn up. There was a barricade erected at Grand Canal Bridge, and Mount Street Bridge was held by eight Volunteers, who occupied Clanwilliam House on the City side of the bridge,

St. Stephen's Hall on the other side, and a house at the corner of Haddington Road. In this house were Lieutenant Malone and three Volunteers.

The position was of great importance, as reinforcements would be sure to come from England; and as the railway could not be utilized, the troops would come by Ballsbridge. This is what happened on Wednesday, when 2000 soldiers marched from Kingstown by road. After passing Ballsbridge, 1200 of them were sent to the left. The remaining 800, being Sherwood Foresters, advanced by Northumberland Road to Mount Street Bridge. Reaching Haddington Road they were met at close range with a heavy rifle fire from Malone's men and from Clanwilliam House. Time after time the soldiers advanced, but each time they were driven back, until the space in front of the bridge was covered with dead and wounded. The British were puzzled, for there were snipers who did deadly work from the houses near, and for a time they found it impossible to locate the firing. But the contest could have but one ending, and by Wednesday night Malone's position had become untenable. He had already sent away two of his men, a third had made good his escape by the rear, and then the house was entered and Malone was killed. The same night the soldiers from Baggot Street reached Clanwilliam House and set it on fire, and there four Volunteers perished; the remaining four escaped.[1]

Scarcely less stubborn was the resistance offered at the South Dublin Union, where Eamonn Ceannt was in command. Nor did these or their comrades under Commandant Colbert surrender until the end of the week, and then only in obedience to the orders of their superiors. Indeed, if valour and the most loyal devotion to each other could have succeeded, the rebels would have won. But they were too few, and they fought against the might of a great Empire, and gradually they were hemmed in until the central position at the Post Office fell.

Lord Kitchener, then Secretary for War, had sent Sir John Maxwell from England to crush the rebellion, and he issued a

[1] *Catholic Bulletin*, Sept.–Dec., 1917.

proclamation on his arrival, placing all Ireland under martial law. General Maxwell had served with Kitchener in Egypt and in South Africa, and in no theatre of war had he shown conspicuous military talent. He was, however, in favour with Kitchener, whose methods he was only too ready to copy. He was unsympathetic, brutal, unfeeling, contemptuous of the Irish as turbulent and intractable, believing that stern severity was the best prescription for them, and that his duty was to mow them down as the Arabs were mown down at Omdurman. He might have issued a proclamation couched in mild terms offering pardon to those who submitted at once, and had this been done some at least would have submitted. He might at least have spared the buildings and starved out those who persevered in rebellion. But this was not his way. There must be instant and unconditional surrender, and as those in the Post Office refused to surrender he attacked their position with artillery and incendiary shells.

On Easter Monday a few lancers entering O'Connell Street were fired on from the Post Office and retreated with the loss of two men. On Tuesday constant sniping was going on round Fairview between Volunteers and soldiers. On the same day the troops, breaking through the barricades on the North Circular Road, advanced towards O'Connell Street; troops posted at Trinity College attacked and captured most of Stephen's Green, and their machine-guns swept Grafton Street, College Green, and Westmoreland Street.[1] Mount Street bridge was forced on Wednesday, but De Valera held his ground pluckily in the Ringsend area. While he held the bakery with his men he had cleverly run up a Republican flag on an old distillery building near, and the military, believing this to be the main position, continued shelling the distillery until it was destroyed. By Thursday all the outlying positions were in the hands of the military. But General Maxwell became impatient and, instead of waiting for a combination of hunger and rifle fire to compel the surrender of the Post Office, he assailed it with incendiary shells which set it and other build-

[1] O'Boyle, pp. 70–6.

ings on fire, and soon almost the whole of Lower O'Connell Street was in flames. Along Eden Quay, down O'Connell Street, in Abbey Street, Henry Street, and Earl Street, shops, hotels, banks, and insurance offices were all burning. Afraid to venture out lest they might encounter rifle or shell fire, the street suffocated with blinding smoke, the sky reddened with flames, the heat almost intolerable, those who occupied the houses in the north side of O'Connell Street had such an experience as rarely falls to any man. The Post Office was burning fiercely on Friday and it was then plain that Pearse and his companions must soon surrender.

A Dublin priest who was called to the General Post Office during the fight has given a graphic account of what he saw. At Pearse's request he went there on Monday night and for nearly three hours he was hearing confessions. Tuesday and Wednesday he was busy attending the wounded, both soldiers and civilians, and on Thursday he was again summoned to the Post Office. There was danger of being in the streets, as Marlborough Street was swept with machine-guns from across the river, Abbey Street by fire from the Custom House, and O'Connell Street was under fire from Trinity College, and from the fire of the troops advancing through D'Olier Street. It was only by a circular route through Parnell Street, Moore Street, and Henry Street he made his way from Marlborough Street, and there was danger at every step.

All night long and again on Friday the priest remained helping the nurses to attend the wounded, and in some cases helping to remove the wounded to hospitals. On Friday evening the roof of the Post Office was burning. Earlier in the day some of the nurses went home, but some remained to the end. About midday James Connolly was seriously wounded, and when the fire broke out there were in all sixteen wounded, some of them very seriously. The more helpless were carried in blankets through the buildings at the rear and out into the Coliseum Theatre in Henry Street. But even here nobody was safe, as the military were behind a barricade in Parnell Street. and swept Moore

Street with machine-gun fire. It was here that the O'Rahilly fell while leading his men from the burning Post Office. Before leaving he knelt down to receive absolution, and then said to the priest: " Father, we shall never meet again in this world ". He was a gallant and chivalrous gentleman, with an income of nearly £1000 a year, and happily married, and though at the last, foreseeing failure, he opposed the rebellion, he bowed to the will of the majority and fell while gallantly leading his men. As the theatre in Henry Street would soon be on fire, the wounded there had again to be moved, through the houses leading to Princes Street and Abbey Street, until Jervis Street Hospital was reached. The priest adds that the Coliseum Theatre had been in the hands of the rebels for several days, its bar well stocked with wine and whisky, and yet not a single bottle had been touched.[1]

When the Republican leaders were compelled to abandon the Post Office on Friday, they did so at great peril, encumbered with the wounded Connolly. At last, crawling on hands and feet, they reached a house in Moore Street. There, Pearse, Connolly, Clarke, MacDermott, and Plunkett, all members of the Provisional Government, consulted long and earnestly. Nor could they see any alternative to surrender. They had at first thought of cutting their way to the Four Courts, but this plan was abandoned and nothing was left but to send one of their nurses, Miss O'Farrell, with an offer of surrender to General Lowe, who was in command at the Rotunda. He told her he would have nothing but unconditional surrender, and after some delay Pearse saw him and agreed to his terms. The surrender was announced to the public as follows:

" In order to prevent further slaughter of unarmed persons, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, members of the Provisional Government present at head-quarters have agreed to unconditional surrender, and the commanders of all units of the Republican forces will order their followers to lay down their arms.

" Signed P. H. PEARSE."

[1] *Catholic Bulletin*, Aug., 1918.

Miss O'Farrell carried Pearse's message to Commandant Daly at the Four Courts, and about eight o'clock on Saturday evening all those under Pearse's and Daly's commands, numbering about 400, surrendered their arms in O'Connell Street, and were placed under guard for the night in the open space in front of the Rotunda. Miss O'Farrell was again active the next day and carried Pearse's message to Commandant Mallin at the College of Surgeons, to Commandant De Valera at Boland's, and to Commandant MacDonagh at Jacob's Factory. But MacDonagh refused to surrender until he had consulted Eamonn Ceannt at the South Dublin Union, and when he had done this, both commanders surrendered. There was a difficulty also with De Valera, who refused to obey any orders except those of Commandant MacDonagh. Ultimately, however, he did surrender, though very reluctantly; and at the College of Surgeons it was the Countess Markievicz, the second in command, who headed the Volunteers when they laid down their arms. She was dressed entirely in green, tunic, hat, puttees and boots. Thus attired, she walked up to the officer, kissed her revolver, and then handed over revolver and bandoleer. All had surrendered on Sunday, and with these surrenders the rebellion was over and General Maxwell's work was done.[1]

There were indeed some few outbreaks in the country, but they were unimportant. Round Athenry and Oranmore a crowd assembled under Liam Mellows, but they effected nothing and soon dispersed to their homes. Near Dunleer some Volunteers encountered a few police and one policeman was shot. At Swords under Dr. Hayes and a school teacher, Mr. Thomas Ashe, the Volunteers took possession of the post office and the police barrack. At Ashbourne in Meath a party of fifty police were attacked, and after a five-hours struggle, the County Inspector, District Inspector, and eight police were killed, fourteen wounded, the remainder being disarmed. In Wexford a strong body of Volunteers took possession of Enniscorthy and held the town for

[1] *Catholic Bulletin*, April, 1917. Miss O'Farrell's Narrative: *Daily Mail* account.

several days, but surrendered when news came of the surrender of the leaders at Dublin.[1]

It was the Republicans among the Volunteers and in the Citizen Army who were concerned in the rebellion. Neither Mr. Griffith nor the vast majority of the Sinn Fein party were in any way identified with it, and yet, both in England and in Ireland the Sinn Feiners were blamed for all that had taken place. They were charged with having got German gold, though not a single German mark passed through their hands. They had not even got German guns, for Casement's consignment was at the bottom of the sea. They had embarked on an undertaking which was bound to end in disaster—a few thousand half-armed men against the might of a great empire. Their plans had miscarried, and the results of the rebellion were the death of many Irishmen in their prime, the imprisonment of many others, misery brought into many a home and sorrow into many a heart, the loss of property, the smoking ruins of Dublin, the partial effacement and total disfigurement of one of the finest streets in the world. Even Irishmen judged the Sinn Feiners harshly and had no objection to see them suitably punished, after a fair trial and when their guilt had been proved.

It was here that General Maxwell failed. A few years earlier the Boers rebelled and imperilled the whole empire, but they had been pardoned and given the management of their own affairs, and with the happiest results. In the middle of the Great War De Wet and others had again raised the standard of revolt; and though their guilt was plain to all the world, their punishment was light and they were soon set at liberty. In 1916 thousands of Irishmen were fighting under the British flag, and not a few were relatives of those who had rebelled. If the Sinn Feiners were to be punished, let it be after a fair trial, where the credibility of witnesses could be tested, where evidence could be sifted and weighed, and where motives could be examined and extenuating circumstances admitted.

General Maxwell would have none of these things. Armed

[1] O'Boyle, pp. 131–45.

with authority he would use it to the full, and it would be justice untempered with mercy. The rebels had fought fairly, and treated kindly any soldier who fell into their hands. On the other hand, the British troops had no better terms for the Irish, rebels or others, than Irish swine. If they were not in rebellion they were in sympathy with those who were and deserved no mercy, and in many cases the innocent and unarmed were shot down. North King Street saw horror upon horror. The British troops shot down indiscriminately. Parents were locked up and their sons taken out into a yard and butchered, without trial or semblance of a trial. In not a few cases, soldiers were hospitably entertained and then turned upon those who had fed them and shot them down.

Near Portobello Barracks Messrs. Sheehy Skeffington, Dixon and MacIntyre were arrested by order of Captain Colthurst and butchered in the barrack yard. Neither had anything to do with the rebellion, and Mr. Sheehy Skeffington was a pacifist who had all his lifetime conscientious objections against war: and neither of these men would be allowed to see a priest before they were done to death. Nor would Captain Colthurst be displaced from his position by the Castle gang of military officers under General Maxwell, and it was only when Lord Kitchener was directly appealed to that Colthurst was placed under arrest.[1] All over the country raids and arrests were made, and hundreds who had no connection and no sympathy with the rebellion were hurried on board ship and thrown into English prisons.[2] It was sought even to terrorize the younger priests who were credited with having Sinn Fein sympathies, and General Maxwell wrote to Dr. O'Dwyer of Limerick, complaining of two of his priests, and asking that they should be punished. But the Bishop of Limerick promptly refused, and told General Maxwell that his butcheries in Ireland had already roused universal disgust.

While the rank and file, and even innocent men and women, were treated with such severity, it may easily be guessed what was the fate of the leaders. They were not treated as prisoners

[1] Evidence at Court Martial on Colthurst.
[2] Whitmore, *With the Irish in Frongoch.*

of war, nor, on the other hand, indicted for high treason before a civil judge. They were tried by military officers, and in secret, so that the public had no means of knowing what was the evidence of their guilt. Before such a court they might expect the fate of a sheep before a jury of wolves. They were declared guilty and executed one after another until fifteen had paid the death penalty. The object was to strike terror, and morning after morning the volleys rang out in the yard of Kilmainham prison, warning those still in their cells that a fresh batch had met their doom. Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett were shot on the first morning, Major MacBride on a later day, and Connolly who was unable to walk was strapped to a chair and shot to death. All were buried in quicklime in the prison yard. De Valera, also sentenced to death, was reprieved because he was an American citizen. The Countess Markievicz was sentenced to penal servitude for life, as was also Professor Eoin MacNeill, and hundreds received lesser sentences. England was well pleased, and the announcement of the first executions was met in the House of Commons by an exultant cheer.

In Ireland there was stupefaction and then fierce hate. The Nationalists thrown into prison, the Sinn Feiners sent to penal servitude by partisan and ignorant military officers, the Sinn Fein leaders whose bodies were buried in quicklime were all Irish and had been imprisoned or done to death because they had fought for Irish freedom. After all this was nothing more than the crime of Wolfe Tone and Emmet whose memories all Irishmen revere. Nor was the Sinn Fein programme unreasonable. The Home Rule Act would not be enforced because a veto on Irish legislation was given to Belfast. Irishmen were sent to foreign fields to fight for the freedom of small nations, but must not expect freedom themselves. How could Irishmen trust a Government under which these things were done, and how could they hope for justice from a Parliament which kept such a Government in office?

Nor were the Sinn Fein leaders the scoundrels depicted on English platforms, the swine which excited the ire of British officers. On the contrary, they were men of unblemished char-

acter, men of education and culture and high ideals. Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett were poets. MacNeill and De Valera were university professors. Connolly had spent his life in trying to improve the labourer's lot. Major MacBride had fought for the Boers in the South African War, thankful that he could thus strike a blow at the hereditary enemy of his race. Sean M'Dermott was a journalist, Ceannt had at college a notable academic record. Daly and others were less distinguished but not less honest and sincere. To pardon Boer leaders was wise, to pardon the Irish leaders would have been equally so. To imprison and execute them was to make them martyrs of Irish liberty. The method of their trial, the excessive severity of their punishment excited disgust in the mind of every Irishman with a heart to feel. In their rebellion the Sinn Feiners had failed, but in their death they had gloriously triumphed. Elevated to the same level as Wolfe Tone and Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, they began to be idolized as heroes and martyrs: the Sinn Fein ranks were rapidly filled by deserters from Mr. Redmond's followers, and the doctrines of Sinn Fein, hitherto not even understood, were soon raised to the dignity of a national creed.

For England, in the midst of a world war, this was an unwelcome change. Worse still there came across the Atlantic an angry growl. The effect produced on American opinion by the executions was wholly bad.[1] A public funeral was accorded in New York to the executed leaders, and through streets lined with sympathizers, standing silently with bared heads, empty hearses passed.[2] To carry out the behests of Dublin Castle was not unwelcome to the Coalition Government then in power. But American sympathy and American money were required, and it was not prudent to outrage American opinion. The executions ceased; those imprisoned had their cases inquired into and many were released; General Maxwell ceased to be regarded as a hero: and instead of further repression Mr. Asquith determined that an effort should be made for reconciliation and appeasement.

[1] *The Times*. American Correspondent.
[2] Henry, *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, pp. 220–1.

CHAPTER XII

After the Rebellion

The secret of England's success in Australia and Canada and South Africa is that she has allowed these colonies to govern themselves. She has at the same time undertaken, when danger comes, to champion their cause and defend them from attack. Because of this they are loyal, and it is because the opposite course has been pursued in Ireland that Ireland has never been contented with English rule. The English of the Plantagenet times regarded the Brehon law as only a barbarous custom. The Tudors, having discarded the ancient faith, insisted with fire and sword that the Irish should also change. Succeeding ages saw the Irish deprived of lands and liberty, and, slowly and grudgingly, after the lapse of centuries acquiring the elementary rights of citizens. Not even once have Englishmen, charged with the task of Irish government, completely mastered Irish conditions. They have not put themselves in the place of Irishmen so as to understand the Irishman's point of view. They have obstinately refused to give Irishmen what they wanted, but have insisted on giving them what they themselves, ill-informed and unsympathetic, have considered good for them.

Nor were Mr. Asquith and his colleagues in 1916 wiser or better than those who preceded them. Ireland protested against her overtaxation by England and she got heavier burdens placed upon her shoulders. She asked, peaceably and constitutionally, for full Home Rule within the Empire and she got the pitiful Home Rule Act of 1914. She asked it for the whole country, but she would get it only for twenty-six counties, although twenty-eight counties voted for Home Rule. And the remaining

four counties, it was notorious, were influenced from England, and were not so much objecting to Home Rule as playing the game of British politicians. In spite of the treatment their country received Irishmen volunteered for the army in thousands, and at the time of the rebellion of Easter Week there were 150,000 Irish soldiers fighting in the Great War under the British flag. Less than 2000 engaged in the rebellion, all countrymen and in many cases relatives of those who were fighting for England in the war. These rebels fought with humanity, as even Mr. Asquith admitted.[1] They tended the wounded soldiers as their own, and freely shared their rations with the few prisoners who fell into their hands. The leaders were men of stainless character, and some allowance might surely be made for men who had, and not without reason, ceased to look to Parliament for redress.

The Coalition Government, however, was in no mood to be merciful or even just. Not in a passion, but with deliberation, the leaders were tried by secret court martial, and morning after morning the shots rang out until fifteen had met their doom. Messrs. Skeffington, MacIntyre, and Dixon were murdered in cold blood: and in North King Street men were taken out by British soldiers, shot dead and buried in their own yards at dead of night. All over the country bands of soldiers were engaged for weeks in making raids. Men who had no sympathy with the rebellion were interned in English prisons, and in not a few cases such men had to suffer the horrors of solitary confinement; Mr. Healy and others brought the matter before Parliament, but ministers were deaf and would not hear, and were blind and would not see. Nor was it until American public opinion was plainly outraged that Mr. Asquith paused in the campaign of blood and terror.

The Germans were still strong, and Irish recruits were badly needed to fill up the broken ranks in the British army. Nor was there much hope that such recruits would be available if the executions and raids were continued. Worse still was the disgust and irritation created in America, where Irish influence was strong,

[1] *Hansard*, May, 1916.

and the Irish vote a formidable factor in party contests. England was appealing to America to give men and money in the great fight for human freedom, and appealed as the defender of the weak against the strong. But America was reluctant to listen while Irish opinion at home and abroad was inflamed, and when England described herself as the champion of small nations the Great Republic could ask what of the old nation at her door, held down by military force.

Nor had Mr. Asquith, when he came to Dublin, any difficulty in discovering that it was time for his Government to retrace its steps. He saw the civil and military authorities in Dublin, visited the Sinn Fein prisoners and talked with them, and heard their complaints. Then he visited Belfast and Cork, and consulted with the leading men in both cities. When he returned to London he told the House of Commons that he had brought back from Ireland two main impressions. The first was that the machinery of Irish government, that is, of Dublin Castle government, had hopelessly broken down. The second impression was that a unique opportunity had arisen to settle the Irish question: that men of opposing parties seemed anxious to put aside points of difference and seek for points of agreement, that it was unthinkable that the soldiers from Ulster and those from the rest of Ireland, who were fighting together for the Empire, should renew their quarrels after the war: and that over the smouldering ruins of Dublin a path of peace and unity could be made.[1]

Always anxious to shirk trouble himself Mr. Asquith delegated the task of peacemaking to Mr. Lloyd George. He was to consult with Sir Edward Carson and with Mr. Redmond, would try to bridge over the differences between them, and then would produce an agreed scheme of Home Rule which would be accepted by all. The Unionist *Daily Express* of Dublin made the sensible suggestion that Mr. Healy or Mr. O'Brien, as well as Lord Midleton, should be also consulted. For Mr. Redmond could not speak for all Irish Nationalists, and Sir Edward Carson could not, like Lord Midleton, speak for the Southern Unionists.[2]

[1] *Hansard*, May 25, 1916. [2] *Daily Express*, May 31, 1916.

This suggestion, however, was not adopted, and Mr. Lloyd George appeared satisfied that if he could get Sir Edward and Mr. Redmond to agree, it would be enough. Mr. Redmond's attitude was what might have been expected. During the whole war he had been strongly pro-British. On many recruiting platforms he urged his countrymen to join the army. Both his brother and his son had obtained commissions and were in the firing-line in France. He visited the generals at the front as an honoured guest; and when their incompetence and failure were criticized by Englishmen he defended them with intemperate vehemence. Nor could anything exceed his anger with the Sinn Feiners when they rebelled. He denounced the leaders at home who planned the rebellion, and the Irish in America for supplying them with money. It was, he said, a German rebellion. "Germany plotted it, Germany organized it, Germany paid for it." His only consolation was that on the very day that British soldiers were killed in the streets of Dublin the Dublin Fusiliers in France had dashed forward and by their unconquerable bravery retaken the trenches that the Germans had won at Hulluch. He rejoiced that the Government had put down the rebellion with firmness, adding that it was their duty to do so, and though he asked for leniency for the rank and file of the rebels, towards their leaders he was stern and severe.[1] Nor had he any hesitation in responding to the appeal of Sir Edward Carson, that neither the press nor public men would make party capital out of the events of Easter Week.[2]

This suited Carson admirably, for an English member, Mr. Outhwaite, reminded the Premier that there was a widespread feeling that those who first brought German arms into Ireland should be prosecuted. And it showed how much abler a politician Carson was than Redmond. If newspapers and public men put aside all mention of the gun-running at Larne and of the Provisional Government and its enthusiasm for the German Foreign Minister, Kuhlmann, the anger directed against Carson, who was so largely responsible for the war and for the rebellion,

[1] *Hansard*, May 3, 1916. [2] *Ibid.*, April 27, 1916.

would soon subside. But Carson himself had no scruple about scoring off his opponents by calling for conscription for Ireland, and showing that in the matter of recruiting, Nationalist Ireland had done badly.[1] This was good politics, calculated to lessen sympathy for Ireland in England, and to show that Redmondite professions of loyalty were insincere.

But whatever was thought of Mr. Redmond in England it is certain that in Ireland he was losing ground. Nor did he and his party retrieve their position by publishing an appeal to the Irish people recounting the great deeds of the Irish Party for the last forty years. The fact was that their influence was rapidly passing and now they were powerless for good. The raids and imprisonments under Maxwell's regime were brought before Parliament by Mr. Healy and others: but the mass of the Irish Party remained quiescent. Mr. Dillon called attention to what he had himself seen in Dublin, and he was indignant about the atrocities in North King Street. But he insisted on no public inquiry, and in the end was satisfied with an inquiry held by the military themselves. The evidence was never made public, and Mr. Dillon accepted Mr. Asquith's assurance that he himself had read the evidence and that the guilt of the military was not proved.[2] Mr. Redmond's plea for leniency for the rank and file of the rebels meant little. He cared little for the treatment they got, and was spurred to action only by exasperated public opinion.

It was at this point that the Coalition Government asked Mr. Lloyd George to undertake the settlement of the Irish question. It was an adroit move. While discussion and negotiations were proceeding, the Government would be saved from press criticism, especially in America; and in Ireland, in the near prospects of Home Rule, the Irish leaders' shortcomings would be forgotten. Mr. Asquith could not see how Orangemen and Nationalists who fought together in the war could not agree at home when the war was over. Mr. Lloyd George, having special qualities as a peacemaker, was acting at the request of all his colleagues, and there was every hope that he would succeed.

[1] *Hansard.* [2] *Ibid.*

Meantime, though martial law would be continued, he appealed to the press and to public men to cease discussing the Irish question. Mr. Redmond was reluctant to leave things in Ireland as they were without protest, but at Mr. Asquith's request he would be silent in public and talk only in secret to his friend Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. William O'Brien disliked this further suppression of free speech. Carson, like a self-sacrificing patriot, though suffering much from press attacks, would hold his tongue. He would say to himself: " Remember that there is a war going on in which your country is involved ".[1]

With commendable celerity Mr. Lloyd George had his proposals ready, and they were published by Mr. Redmond at a meeting of the Irish Party on the 10th of June.

These were:

1. To bring the Home Rule Act into immediate operation.
2. To introduce at once an Amending Bill, as a strictly War Emergency Act, to cover only the period of the war and a short specified interval after it.
3. During that period the Irish members to remain at Westminster in their full number.
4. During this War Emergency period six Ulster counties to be left as at present under the Imperial Government.
5. Immediately after the war, an Imperial Conference of representatives from all the Dominions of the Empire to be held to consider the future government of the Empire, including the question of the government of Ireland.
6. Immediately after this conference and during the interval provided for by the War Emergency Act, the permanent settlement of all the great outstanding problems, such as the permanent position of the six excluded counties, the question of finance and other problems which cannot be dealt with during the war, would be proceeded with.

Mr. Redmond did not disclose what was his own attitude

[1] *Hansard*, May 25, 1916.

regarding these proposals. He had not had any correspondence with Sir Edward Carson; but he understood that Sir Edward had already consulted his friends in Belfast and that a decision had been arrived at, though what it was had not been disclosed. Mr. Redmond wanted his own party to study the proposals and form a judgment on them. He would at once take steps to summon a convention of Ulster Nationalists, and if they approved he would summon a further convention of the Nationalists of the other provinces.

He would accept the decision of these conventions, but it was plain that he wanted the proposals adopted. Some of his friends among the clergy, not indeed remarkable for political sagacity, rushed into the newspapers to announce that all was well. Mr. Devlin vehemently attacked all who presumed to criticize the Lloyd George proposals. He said there was no idea of partition, no placing of six counties under Carson's Provisional Government—a bold statement in face of the proposals themselves. He was liberal of prophecy, and was quite certain that the Dublin Parliament of twenty-six counties would soon attract the excluded Ulster counties. Further, a settlement now would involve an immediate amnesty for all the Sinn Fein prisoners. On the other hand, a rejection of the proposals would be followed by division among Nationalists, by the reappearance of racial and religious passion, by the recrudescence of secret societies. It was a lurid picture, skilfully drawn, and had its effect on the timid and the wavering.

The *Freeman's Journal* used all its influence in support of Mr. Devlin's view, and the Irish Party published a pamphlet appealing to the Irish people to sustain the party in standing for sanity and conciliation. This pamphlet put together all that could be said for the Lloyd George proposals, and had for its title *Ireland's Path to Freedom.*

At the Belfast conference Mr. Devlin did not depend so much on arguments as on votes, and had marshalled his hosts with the skill of a practised hand. The priests in the six counties were only allowed one delegate from each parish, while every M.P.,

every county or district councillor, every officer of a Hibernian Society could be present. At the convention so composed Mr. Devlin made an impassioned appeal. Mr. Dillon was less eloquent but equally vehement. Mr. Redmond declared he would retire from the chair if the proposals were not accepted. In the result Mr. Redmond triumphed, 475 voting for the proposals and 261 against. Armagh, Antrim and Down, including Belfast, gave substantial majorities to Mr. Redmond. In Derry, including the city, the victory was close. But both Fermanagh and Tyrone had heavy majorities against. These were Home Rule Counties, and did not wish to be separated from the rest of Ireland, and above all had no desire to link their fortunes with a Carson government at Belfast.

There was no difficulty in getting these resolutions of the Belfast Convention approved by the Directory of the United League, and Mr. Redmond having got its approval forgot his promise to call a convention of the three Southern provinces. He was thus able to bring back a message from Ireland to Westminster that Irish Nationalists would accept a Parliament for twenty-six counties. His reason for not consulting the Southern provinces in convention was that he would certainly be defeated. For the proposal to dismember Ireland was everywhere unpopular.

The critics of the Irish Party were numerous, and were outspoken and bitter, and the Irish leaders were freely charged with treachery and corruption. They had solemnly declared that they would have no share in the payment of members of Parliament, but in due course had accepted their salaries. Professing belief in independent opposition, they became part of the Liberal Party. Their press organ had become a training ground for government office. The local bodies were filled with councillors who were ignorant and corrupt, and Parliament with incompetent legislators. Not only were Mr. Lloyd George's budget and Insurance Act accepted, but his proposed extra tax on brewing and distilling would also have been accepted if it had not been for the opposition of Mr. William O'Brien. Mr. Redmond had declared that it would be a profanation and a blasphemy to dismember Ireland,

and yet he was ready to give over six Ulster counties to the Orange Covenanters. And these counties contained the grave of St. Patrick and the land of the O'Neills. The Irish leaders were told that they would have done better work if they had more frequently consulted public opinion, and had been less frequently at the breakfast table of Mr. Lloyd George. Nor would the Irish people accept under any persuasion half a Parliament for three-quarters of Ireland.[1]

Dr. MacHugh, Bishop of Derry, had vigorously protested against the partition scheme, and the other bishops of the excluded counties entirely agreed with him. Cardinal Logue went so far as to say that it would be infinitely better to remain as we were for fifty years than to accept the proposals, and the Catholic bishops of the other twenty-six counties were equally emphatic.

Mr. Redmond and Mr. Devlin had been vigorously protesting that nothing but temporary partition with a view to permanent unity had ever been contemplated in the proposals of Mr. Lloyd George. But it soon appeared that he had either misunderstood the proposals or had been shamefully deceived. Sir Edward Carson was an old friend of Mr. Lloyd George, for whom he had acted as counsel in 1916 in the Marconi scandal case. The spectacle of the militant reactionary defending the militant radical surprised many. The incident however was the beginning of a lasting friendship between the two men, and in the interview they had about an Irish settlement in 1916 Sir Edward Carson felt quite satisfied that his demand of a clean cut of the six counties was conceded. Nor had Mr. Lloyd George any reluctance in assuring him that this was true. At the same time he was assuring his old friends Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon that the proposals were but temporary and provisional, and in no way involved the permanent severance of the six Ulster counties from the rest of Ireland.

Gradually the truth appeared. Immediately after the Belfast Convention, Lord Lansdowne, a member of the Cabinet, and

[1] This most formidable indictment is found in a pamphlet— *Through Corruption to Dismemberment*, published in 1916.

Unionist leader in the House of Lords, vehemently attacked the Irish as rebels and traitors, unworthy of Home Rule. Only the necessities of the war allowed him to assent to any agreement with them, but he insisted on an express provision declaring that the supremacy of the Imperial authority remained in the twenty-six counties over the army, navy and defence of the realm. When this was conceded by Mr. Redmond he was still unsatisfied, and would not allow the Irish members to remain in their full strength at Westminster after a parliament had been set up in Dublin. Nor would Carson nor Bonar Law agree to have the six excluded counties ever come into the Dublin Parliament, except with their own consent. Indeed Sir Edward Carson never wavered in his demand that these counties must be conciliated, not coerced, though he forgot that Fermanagh and Tyrone, both Home Rule counties, were being coerced to join Belfast.

Mr. Asquith was more anxious to meet the views of Carson than those of Redmond, and readily agreed that the six counties could not come in, except by an Act of Parliament. He went further and said that even if Carson and Redmond agreed to certain proposals, these must be referred to and approved of by Parliament. The original Draft Bill, embodying proposals which Mr. Redmond was willing to accept, was entirely changed after examination by the Cabinet; and while the new proposals were under examination Mr. Redmond was bluntly told that the Cabinet did not wish to have any consultation with him. These new proposals to which the Cabinet agreed were that the six counties were to be permanently excluded, and as soon as the Home Rule Parliament for twenty-six counties was an actual fact, the number of Irish members in Westminster was to be cut down. These were the proposals of the whole Cabinet of Messrs. Asquith and Lloyd George, as well as of Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne. This was the Cabinet's last word, and Mr. Redmond could accept the offer or not as he pleased.

Mr. Redmond had no option but to reject them. He had already imperilled his position in Ireland by assenting to temporary partition, and he dared not accept partition which would

be permanent. Still, buffetted and scorned by his Liberal allies, he was ready to protest his loyalty. He still considered the war Ireland's war, and he spoke of the mad and wicked rebellion of Easter Week, with as much fervour as if he were a British politician.

Always thinking of himself, Mr. Dillon was at great pains to explain away his own dealings with the British Government. But he could not deny that he had been much behind the scenes, nor that he and Mr. Redmond had been negotiating with Mr. Lloyd George and had assented to what was really permanent partition. After the war, it is true, the Irish question would be considered by an Imperial Conference. But that body might be more favourable to Carson than to Redmond, and at best it could only make recommendations to the Imperial Parliament. These might be approved or not. It was plain that Carson had triumphed, having got all he demanded at the Buckingham Palace Conference. Six counties were to be excluded and not four, and they were to be excluded permanently and have their own separate departments of state.

Mr. Devlin was very angry with Mr. Asquith, whom he charged with cowardice and betrayal, and Mr. Asquith indeed was conscious that he was not without blame. He protested, however, that he had repeatedly warned Messrs. Redmond and Dillon that he and Mr. Lloyd George were only Cabinet plenipotentiaries, and what they agreed on must come under Cabinet review. To salve the wounds of the Irish leaders he granted a public inquiry into the murder of Mr. Sheehy Skeffington; he promised that those who suffered loss of property in the Dublin rebellion would receive Government compensation; and he informed them that of 1840 Irish in English prisons, 1172 had already been released. He protested that he was a Home Ruler all his life, and was confident that the Irish question would yet be settled to the satisfaction of all. Finally he gained the cheers of the Unionists by praising General Maxwell and promising to continue martial law, and still more by re-establishing Dublin Castle Government.

After the rebellion, Lord Wimborne and Mr. Birrell, two Liberals, had resigned, and no successors had since been appointed. Dublin Castle was so discredited in the eyes of all that it could not be continued. In spite of this Mr. Asquith now set up what had been thrown down. Lord Wimborne was reappointed Viceroy, but his office would be merely ornamental. The real power would be in the hands of the new Chief-Secretary. To this office he appointed Mr. Duke, K.C., a Tory, who in 1913 had declared that the Ulster Orangemen, rather than have Home Rule, would be justified in rebelling. The new position then was that the Irish Government was handed over to two followers of Sir Edward Carson. For Mr. Campbell was appointed Attorney-General.[1]

In the months that followed, the Irish Party never stood so low in public esteem. In helping to tax the brewers and pass the Insurance Act they had incurred the hatred of the Unionists, and now the Unionists had their revenge by treating the Irish with derision and scorn. The Liberals had used them to cling to office, and threw them off because they wanted them no longer. Mr. Lloyd George patronizingly advised them to accept partition and be thankful; but if they chose not to do so it was not for him to complain. Nor did the Irish Party deserve a better fate. Even yet they could not act a manly or an honest part, and while publicly they assailed the new Unionist Chief-Secretary, in private they were begging him for offices for their friends. They appealed to Sir Edward Carson, but he treated their appeals, as he had always done, with contempt. Nor was their professed zeal for the war appreciated in Great Britain. The English observed that if the Irish leaders were so loyal, why not advise the Irish people to submit to conscription as the English had already done. Never had party leaders so misused great opportunities. For years they held the Government in the hollow of their hands, and now in 1916 they came back to Ireland with empty hands. Dublin Castle still ruled. Maxwell and martial law had dethroned the civil law. Frongoch in Wales was full of Irishmen without trial or without

[1] *Hansard*, July 24 and 31, 1916.

charge: Wakefield and Reading prisons had Irishmen, kept on mere suspicion; and in Lewes and other jails were Irishmen whose only crime was to love Ireland well, who were eating prison fare and clad in prison garb.

The Irish people were disgusted with the Irish Party and with Parliament, and were going over in crowds to Sinn Fein. Mr. Redmond tried to stem the tide by appealing to what had been done in Parliament. And he moved in Parliament in October: "That the system of government at present maintained in Ireland is inconsistent with the principles for which the allies are fighting in Europe, and has been mainly responsible for the recent unhappy events and for the present state of feeling in that country." But his motion was rejected by 303 to 106, almost three to one. The Empire was then hard pressed for men to fill the broken ranks in France, and Irish recruits would be welcome. Nor was Mr. Redmond unwilling to respond. Let the Government withdraw martial law, release the untried prisoners and give the status of political prisoners to those recently sentenced to penal servitude; and let the Home Rule Act be at once put in force. Mr. Asquith however was adamant. Belfast must be allowed to rule Ireland, and as Belfast objected to Home Rule, the Home Rule Act could not be enforced. Mr. Redmond was told that nothing was wanting for peace but to have the Irish agree among themselves, and to prevent any such agreement Belfast was encouraged to be unreasonable from across the Channel. Mr. Lloyd George reminded Parliament that only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the Irish had joined the army, while Great Britain had already submitted to conscription. The Irish were expected to join the army in greater numbers, and if they did not both Parliament and press threatened conscription, while at the same time Ireland was not to get her freedom.[1]

The war had then lasted for more than two years, and though Italy and Roumania had lately joined the Allies, Germany and her Allies were still unconquered. Indeed the territory in their hands showed it was they who had won and not their opponents.

[1] *Hansard*, Oct. 18, 1916.

Germany held nearly all Belgium and Northern France; she also held all Poland and some of Western Russia; Serbia had been beaten; and against Turkey England had failed. The assistance of Roumania had been a misfortune rather than a help. While able to hold back their numerous enemies on the several war fronts, the Germans with great rapidity massed two powerful armies and hurled them against Roumania. Her Capital was soon in their hands, and in spite of some assistance from Russia her armies were soon overwhelmed. So capable a critic as Mr. Churchill could see no sign that the end of the war was in sight, and he believed that in 1917 Germany would be stronger than ever.[1]

The English are patient and tenacious, but they were not satisfied that the best was being done by the Government. There was muddling and mismanagement and a want of concentration of effort. Mr. Asquith was blamed as too much attached to the old methods and the old men. Newspapers assailed him and politicians intrigued against him, and when the time was considered ripe for his dethronement Mr. Lloyd George sent him a letter in December proposing to set up a small war committee, to act apart from the Cabinet and independent of it, and which would be charged with the whole conduct of the war. Mr. Asquith would have a seat on the Committee, but only as a consultant; he would have no vote and no real control. If the scheme were not accepted Mr. Lloyd George would resign from the Government, and as Mr. Asquith would not agree, it was he himself who resigned, and Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister.

He was a Welshman, the son of a poor schoolmaster, owing his education and profession to an uncle who was but a village cobbler. A Baptist in religion Mr. George had never been friendly with the clergy of the Established Church; a Radical from his childhood he disliked the landlord and the capitalist; a courageous man he was not afraid of taking the side of the Boers, and so earning the unpopular title of pro-Boer. With great Parliamentary gifts he was one of the few who did not shrink from an encounter

[1] Article in *London Magazine*, Jan., 1917.

with Mr. Chamberlain, to whom he was superior as an orator and not inferior in debating power. Under Mr. Asquith he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it was, no doubt, a source of gratification to him that he imposed fresh burdens of taxation on the idle rich, and that he took away from Dissenting Wales the burden of an alien church. During the war he had always encouraged the nation, even in periods of gloom and defeat, and he had inspired confidence where so many were depressed. To remedy a shortage of munition he became Minister of Munitions, and when Lord Kitchener was drowned in June, 1916, it was Mr. Lloyd George who succeeded him as Minister of War.

Early in his public life he was a personal friend of Michael Davitt, and in Gladstone's time Wales was almost unanimous for Home Rule. The Welsh Wesleyan or Baptist has not much love for the tenets of Catholicity, and Mr. Lloyd George shares this antipathy. He is quite willing to play the rôle of the layman turned preacher, and rarely have such men been friends to Catholic Ireland. Whatever be the reason for Mr. Lloyd George's unfriendliness to Ireland, it is certain he was unfriendly in Mr. Asquith's Cabinet. He helped to delay Home Rule and was the most powerful advocate of partition. Having soiled his hands with speculation in Marconi shares he somehow fell under the influence of Sir Edward Carson, and this influence on his public conduct has been disastrous. Carson and he were friends in the first Coalition Government, and now in Mr. Lloyd George's own Government Carson was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. In the small committee called the War Cabinet were Carson's official friends, Lords Milner and Curzon and Mr. Bonar Law, and among the heads of the Administration were Messrs. Balfour, Walter Long, and F. E. Smith.

From such a Government Ireland had even less to expect than from the Government of Mr. Asquith. Mr. Lloyd George, however, had set his heart on winning the war, and undoubtedly he marshalled the resources of the Empire with vigour and skill. By retaining Lords Milner and Curzon he retained the support of the classes. He also purchased the support of labour by appoint-

ing three labour members in his government, Mr. Henderson being in the War Cabinet. It was important also to procure the support of the Irish, especially if he could attract Irish support without giving much in exchange. In Australia the Irish were strong enough to defeat conscription. In America they were strong enough to prevent any cordial co-operation between America and England. In Ireland itself they would no longer join the army, and the unrest and discontent made it necessary to keep British troops in Ireland which were badly needed in France. In November Mr. Asquith had removed the hated Maxwell from the Irish command and put an Irishman in his place. But Mr. Asquith had not the courage or manliness to do more. Mr. Lloyd George went further, and a few days before Christmas he released the Irish prisoners interned in England.[1] Those sentenced to penal servitude were still detained, nor would they be given the status of political prisoners. A Bill was also passed providing compensation for those who had suffered loss of property in the rebellion. There was talk also of an Irish settlement, and if such a settlement came, the remaining prisoners would certainly get their freedom.

Such was the condition of things when, in the end of December, Mr. O'Kelly, M.P. for North Roscommon died and a Sinn Feiner entered the field against the Irish Party candidate. The Party candidate was Mr. Devine, an influential local man. The Sinn Feiner was a stranger, Count Plunkett, whose son had been executed for his share in the rebellion. There was a third candidate, Mr. Tully, who stood as an Independent. The issues were quite clear. Mr. Devine meant to follow Mr. Redmond. Count Plunkett would not go to Westminster, having no faith in the British Parliament. The voters agreed with him and the figures at the poll were, Plunkett 3022, Devine 1708, Tully 687.

The overwhelming defeat astonished all parties, and Mr. Redmond, feeling that something should be done, moved in the House of Commons that " it was essential without further delay to confer upon Ireland the free institutions long promised to her ".

[1] Whitmore, *With the Irish in Frongoch.*

The motion was proposed by Mr. T. P. O'Connor and seconded by Major William Redmond, who had come direct from the trenches in France and who made a moving appeal. But Mr. Lloyd George was unyielding. He admitted indeed that Ireland was discontented: " that centuries of ruthless and often brutal injustice, centuries of insolence and insult, had driven hatred of British rule into the very marrow of the Irish race: and to-day she is no more reconciled to British rule than she was in the days of Cromwell ". Yet he had no remedy but the old discredited one of partition. He would not coerce Ulster; yet in direct contradiction of this statement he would coerce Fermanagh and Tyrone into a detested partnership with Belfast. Nor would he give county option to the four Unionist counties, for it was not so certain that even these wished to be detached from the rest of Ireland.[1]

Mr. Redmond and his party were so disgusted that, as a protest, they walked out of the House of Commons. Had they remained away they might have in Ireland recovered some of their lost ground, at least they would have attracted some measure of respect. But they could not be kept away, and soon returned to Westminster, where they were absolutely impotent for good. In their absence Mr. Bonar Law stated that a further attempt would be made to settle the Irish question. Nor could there be any doubt that in England there was a widespread desire to give Ireland Home Rule. But Carson, it appeared, had both Lloyd George and Bonar Law in his power, nor had the latter any better suggestion to make than to ask the Irish parties to agree. This was just what the Ulster Orangemen would not do, and which they were encouraged not to do by Tories and renegade Liberals in Great Britain.[2]

This pretended anxiety for an Irish settlement had its origin in the desire to win favour with America. During the war English journals had been sneering at the American President, Mr. Wilson. He was ridiculed because he declared that America was too proud to fight. He was ridiculed as being ready to take any insult from

[1] *Hansard*, March 7, 1917. [2] *Hansard*, March 22, 1917.

Germany, his country being intent only on making money, and caring nothing for human freedom. And President Wilson made the English press and English politicians very angry when he declared that the Allies and their enemies were fighting for the same thing. Were not the Germans Huns and had not Great Britain entered the war to defend right against might? There was no doubt that President Wilson had been re-elected in November, 1916, because he wished America to remain at peace. Nor was there any doubt that, once elected, he was eager to have America join the Allies against Germany.

It is true indeed that Mr. Wilson warned Germany early in 1916 that he would break off relations with her if her unrestricted submarine warfare were continued. But he continued neutral, and in October he suggested that the belligerents should come to terms. He was curtly told by Mr. Lloyd George that " there can be no outside interference at this stage ", and the French Premier declared that there would be no peace without victory; it would be humiliating and dishonourable. In December Mr. Wilson addressed the Senate suggesting that there should be peace without victory, that the balance of power should cease, and that for all nations there must be freedom of the seas. Again, these suggestions were received coldly in England. But in March, 1917, the submarine menace had become alarming; and when allied shipping was sunk at the rate of 10,000 tons a day, a German victory seemed but a matter of time. By that time Mr. Wilson had denounced Germany's unrestricted submarine activity, and even broke off diplomatic relations. He was no longer for peace, but for war. But his hands were tied in America by Irish discontent at home and in America. Hence the anxiety of the British Government for an Irish settlement, an anxiety which was insincere and sprang from no love of justice.